

THE
CROWN OF PINE

A STORY OF CORINTH & THE ISTHMIAN GAMES.

A. J. CHURCH





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THE CROWN OF PINE

THE GROWTH OF THE



THE FOUNTAIN OF PEIRENÉ, CORINTH.

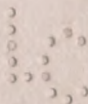
THE CROWN OF PINE

A STORY
OF CORINTH AND THE ISTHMIAN GAMES

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TO MY RELATIVE AND FRIEND,
RICHMOND SEELEY,
IN REMEMBRANCE OF MANY KINDNESSES.

PREFACE

I HAVE transferred to the Isthmian Games, of which we know very little, some details of the proceedings at the great festival of Olympia. In the other parts of the story I have endeavoured to keep as closely as possible to what is known, or, at least, probable. The chronology of St. Paul's life is very uncertain; but the date which I have chosen is, I believe, accepted by some writers. In any case I may plead the licence allowed to the exigencies of fiction.

IGHTHAM,

A. J. C.

August, 1905.

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CHAPTER I

The First of the Wheat Ships

THE time is an hour or so after sunrise on the fifteenth of May in the year 50 of our era ; the place is one of the piers of the Emperor Claudius's new harbour at Ostia. Two men, whose dress and features show them plainly enough to be Jews, are watching the ship which is slowly moving shoreward under a press of sail.

"Your eyes are better than mine, Raphael," says the elder of the two to his companion. "Can you make her out?"

"Scarcely yet, father," replied the young man. He had scarcely spoken, however, when the passing of a cloud let a brilliant ray of sunshine fall on the vessel's bow. "There, there," cried Raphael ben Manasseh—this was the young man's name—"I can distinguish *The Twin Brothers*."

"Accursed idols!" growled Manasseh, spitting on the ground as he spoke.

Raphael shrugged his shoulders, casting at the same time an apprehensive glance around him.

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"Don't you think, father," he said in a deprecatory voice, "that it might make a little awkwardness, if any people happened to be near? And if we charter these people's ships, might we not put up with their ways?"

"Well, well, you youngsters are all for compromise and peace. I often wish that I was well away from this land of abomination. Dear Hebron! I can't think what made me leave thee."

"Business very slack there, I take it," murmured Raphael. "I doubt whether one could find a hundred shekels in the whole place? But see, sir," he went on, "they are lowering a boat; a good thing too, or we might be loitering here till noon."

While father and son are waiting, with what patience they can summon, the arrival of the boat, we may explain the situation. The ship, which bears the name and sign of *The Twin Brothers*, to become famous afterwards for carrying a very distinguished passenger,¹ was the first of the great

¹ "We departed in a ship of Alexandria which had wintered in the island, whose sign was Castor and Pollux," says the writer of the Acts, after describing St. Paul's stay in the island of Melita (Malta). The Greek has Dioscuri, literally "Lads of Zeus," the Twin Brothers, whose names in their Latinized form were Castor and Pollux. It was a common sign of ships, which were supposed to be under the special protection of the two demi-

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fleet of wheat ships which would be making the passage between Alexandria and Ostia during the navigating season of the year. Their arrival was an event of no little importance. For some months past there had been much speculation in Rome and elsewhere in what are now called "futures" in the slang of the corn market. Even in these days, when the system of communication is so complete, the estimates of a crop that has yet to be gathered in differ not a little. Interested parties are influenced more than they know by their hopes and fears. Sellers talk gloomily, buyers are correspondingly sanguine. This year the prospects were more than usually uncertain. The Nile of the previous season had been indifferent,¹ but certainly significant of scarcity rather than plenty. The weather, too, during the harvest had been less consistently fine than usual. Altogether the chances were greatly in

gods; so Horace, praying that the ship which is carrying Virgil to Greece may have a prosperous voyage, says—

"May those twin stars, fair Helen's brothers, guide thy course,
O ship, with ray serene."

¹ The Egyptian harvest of any particular year depends upon the height to which the Nile has risen the year before. It was commonly reckoned that a Nile of less than eighteen feet above the winter level—the Nile begins to rise in May—meant scarcity and even famine; that five and twenty meant abundance.

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favour of an increased price, and the Jewish corn merchants at Rome, who combined in a way that gave them a great advantage over their Gentile rivals, had acted accordingly. Manasseh, who was the wealthiest member of the syndicate, and had a predominant interest in its speculations, had journeyed to Ostia to get the earliest information. In spite of his sentimental recollections of his peaceful birthplace, he was a very keen man of business. Nothing, one may be sure, would have been a more unwelcome change than to leave his highly speculative business in Rome to take up again the cultivation of his ancestral acres, cherished as the thought of them was in what may be termed a different compartment of his soul.

The boat had now reached the pier. It carried two men in the stern. One of them who held the rudder lines was the captain, who was also a part owner. He was a thick-set man of middle age, a Corsican by birth, who might have sat for the portrait of one of the brigands of his native island. Just then, however, he was on his best behaviour. Manasseh was his very good friend and partner, who had lent him the money at the quite moderate interest of ten per cent. to enable him to take up a share in *The Twin Brothers*. He stood up in the stern



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and respectfully saluted the great man on the shore, a politeness which the Jew returned with as much courtesy as he could bring himself to show to a heathen dog. The other passenger, who was no less a person than the supercargo, climbed up the steps of the pier. Manasseh and Raphael greeted him warmly ; he was, in fact, a near kinsman, a nephew of the elder and cousin of the younger man. His name was Eleazar.

“ Welcome, nephew,” said Manasseh. “ You have had a good voyage, that I can tell from your having come in such excellent time. And you are well—to that your blooming looks bear witness. And you bring good news ? ”

“ That, my dear uncle, depends upon how you take them,” replied Eleazar, “ but——”

And he looked round on the little crowd which had by this time gathered on the pier. Then as now a very little incident sufficed to bring a crowd together at the seaside. This particular occasion, too, as some of the bystanders were aware, was one of special importance. The seafaring men had recognised *The Twin Brothers*, and knew that she was the first comer of the wheat ships, and they had also a shrewd idea that a meagre time might be at hand.

“ You are quite right, my dear Eleazar,” said the old man, interpreting correctly his nephew’s

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look ; “ this is too public a place for discussing business. We can find a convenient room at the inn, if you know our countryman Jonah’s place by the Old Harbour. I daresay that you could drink a cup of wine. For my part I never could fancy either food or drink on board a ship. Everything seems to me to taste of bilge water.”

“ Thanks, uncle,” said Eleazar, “ I am too used to the sea to feel quite like that ; still, I do vastly enjoy my first bite and sup when I get on shore.”

The party soon reached the tavern, a building with a humble exterior, which, in accordance with the universal Jewish custom, belied the comfort, not to say the luxury, of the interior.

“ What do you say to a flask of Lebanon ? ”

Raphael made a wry face. “ My dear father, Lebanon, when one can get Falernian or Formian ! ”

“ Would you drink these Gentile abominations ? ” growled the old man.

“ Surely, sir, there is nothing in the law that forbids it.”

Manasseh could hardly say that there was, and Raphael was served with his flask of Falernian, his cousin admiring his courage, but caring little for the matter in dispute.

“ And now to business,” said Manasseh. “ How about the wheat, Eleazar ? ”

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“A very short harvest, and poor in quality.”

As he spoke he drew out of his pocket a little sample bag such as dealers carry now, and have doubtless carried from time immemorial, and poured out the contents upon the table. Manasseh and Raphael carefully examined the grain. They were not long in coming to a conclusion.

“As poor a sample as I have ever seen,” remarked the younger man.

“Well,” said the father, “I can hardly go so far as that. I can remember a long time, you see; but it is very poor. And this, you say, is a fair sample.”

“Yes,” replied Eleazar, “quite a fair sample; some of the grain from Upper Egypt is better, but then some is worse—that, for instance, from the Moeris country, where the canals were not more than half filled.”

“And the price?” asked the older man.

“Well,” said the other, “the price is a very serious matter. It is pretty high now; but no one can say what it will rise to. Let me tell you what I have done. Early last month I bought a million medimni, to be delivered before the end of May, at a hundred and twenty-five sesterces the medimnus.¹ I felt that so far

¹ An Egyptian medimnus equalled three bushels. These and other measures differed as much as our own used to do. A hun-

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I could not be wrong. Well, I could have sold the wheat the day before I started at one hundred and sixty, and I haven't the least doubt in the world that it will go much higher."

Manasseh and his son looked very grave. They had hoped for a rise and, as has been seen, stood to win considerably by it; the supercargo's bargain meant a gain of at least £250,000¹—but there might easily be too much of a good thing. The State had a way of interfering when prices rose above all bearing, and private interest went to the walls. And nowhere was this more likely to happen than at Rome.

"You have done quite right," said Manasseh after a pause; "and I should not have complained if you had bought five times the quantity. But I must confess that I don't like the prospect. The Treasury is in a very poor way. This fine

dred and twenty-five sesterces may be reckoned at £1. This would be equivalent to about fifty-four shillings the quarter, nearly double the price at which it is standing at the present moment in England. It may be remembered that silver and gold were worth more, that is, could purchase more, weight for weight, than they can do now. The penny, "denarius," of the New Testament was a silver coin weighing about three-fifths of a shilling or a little over sevenpence; but more could be bought for it. It was a fair daily wage for a labourer.

¹ I use now, and shall use hereafter, English equivalents for quantities and prices.

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new harbour has cost an enormous sum of money ; so have the drainage works and the aqueducts and the markets. And then for every pound honestly spent another pound has been stolen. Those two scoundrels of freedmen, Pallas and Narcissus, must have at least two million apiece. These are the lions, and there are whole herds of jackals and wolves that are fed to the full. Every farthing comes out of the Treasury. Now what I want to know is this—how is the corn that is given away every week to be paid for ? We are under contract to supply a hundred thousand bushels every month. We have guarded against a rise in price, but not against such a rise as this. The Treasury won't—in fact, it can't—pay the price that we ought to ask. I see trouble ahead.”

It is needless to repeat the subsequent conversation. The practical conclusion arrived at was to buy up all the wheat that could be got, before the impending scarcity became a matter of public knowledge. There would have to be large concessions in the way of prices ; but this would hurt them the less, the stronger they could make their position or holding. It was arranged that Eleazar should enjoy the hospitality of his uncle's house as long as he remained in Italy. *The Twin Brothers* would discharge her cargo with all possible speed, and return to Alexandria, with a

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cargo, if this could be found at a short notice, but in any case without delay, and the super-cargo would return with her. His acquaintance with the conditions of the Alexandria wheat market made his presence indispensable, especially at so critical a time.

CHAPTER II

In the Jews' Quarter

MANASSEH and Raphael had granaries, with an office and a permanent staff, at Ostia. When instructions had been given for the unlading and storing of the cargo of *The Twin Brothers*, the business calling for their personal attention was concluded, and they prepared to return to Rome. A pair of fast-trotting horses were scarcely an hour in traversing the twelve miles that lay between the harbour and the city. The road, lying generally along the right bank of the Tiber, though not following the windings of the river, was almost level and in admirable condition. Entering by the harbour gate, they passed through the famous Gardens which the first of the Caesars had bequeathed to the Roman people, and so reached the Jewish Quarter. Manasseh's home lay a little to the right of the road, occupying a slight elevation, probably artificial, from which it overlooked the Gardens,

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while a garden of its own of a size quite unusual within the city walls led down to the river. Eleazar excused himself from joining his relatives at dinner—they dined at four, a happy compromise, as they thought, between two, the favourite hour of the fashionable and luxurious, and six, the time commonly affected by men of business.

Eleazar was bound for the other end of the Quarter, a region of shops and factories. He had no difficulty in finding the place of which he was in search. It was a factory where the hair of the goats that roamed over the hills of Rough Cilicia¹ was worked up into tents, rugs and the like. A large building, as it appeared in those days, though it would be absolutely insignificant compared with the huge factories of modern times, it was occupied by some thirty workers, all men and boys—the Jew then, as now, does not approve of his womenkind doing any work not domestic—busy combing the hair weaving the cloth and pressing and otherwise preparing for use the manufactured material. A man of middle age, somewhat insignificant in appearance, as far as stature was concerned, but with a singularly pleasing and expressive coun-

¹ Cilicia was divided into two regions, named respectively Rough (Tracheia) and Plain (Pedia).

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tenance, was moving about among the workers and examining the results of their labour. Obviously he was the master of the place, or his representative, and Eleazar, approaching him with a respectful salutation, put into his hands a letter addressed to "Asa ben Ephraim, otherwise Caius Cilnius Aquila, at his house in the Janiculum at Rome." The letter was written in Aramaic, which may be called the modern or popular form of Hebrew, but was arranged in Roman form. It ran thus—

"Lucius Cilnius Aquila of Alexandria to his brother Caius heartily greeting.

"I commend to you and to my sister, your most honoured consort, the bearer of this epistle, Eleazar ben Nathaniel, an inhabitant of this city, a young man zealous of all good things, and filled with a most laudable desire to increase his knowledge of such matters as concern the spiritual life. I am assured that he is altogether faithful and trustworthy. Nevertheless there are certain things, which, especially in these days, it is better not to write with paper and ink, but to communicate by word of mouth. For this reason I leave the young man himself to set forth to you that which is in his mind. Farewell."

As Aquila read the letter, the brightness of his face seemed to grow more intense.

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"All my brother's friends are mine," he cried. "And when did you see my dear brother last? Was he quite well?"

"Quite well when I saw him, and that was just a fortnight since. He gave me this the night before I sailed, and I landed this very morning at Ostia."

"You bring good news," said Aquila. "You are in every way welcome. But where are you lodging? Won't you take up your quarters with us?"

Eleazar explained that he was his uncle's guest.

"Ah," said Aquila with a smile, "we must not meddle with what is Manasseh's, guest, or business, or anything else. But you can give us your company at supper?"

"Yes, with pleasure," replied Eleazar. "I excused myself from the meal at my uncle's, because I did not know when I should be free."

"Come, then," said Aquila, "follow me," and he conducted his guest along a short covered way which connected the factory with the private dwelling. Throwing aside a curtain which covered the end of the passage, he led the way into a small plainly furnished chamber. Its sole occupant was a lady who sat with bent head over a piece of embroidery.

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"A friend of our dear Lucius, my Priscilla," said Aquila.

When the lady rose from her place to greet him, Eleazar thought that he had never seen a nobler looking woman. That she was not a countrywoman of his own he felt sure. At least he had never seen a Hebrew lady with so commanding a figure, with such a wealth of golden hair, and a complexion of such dazzling brightness. And, indeed, Priscilla was no countrywoman of his. He was but seldom at Rome, his business keeping him by far the greatest part of his time at Alexandria. But for this he would probably have heard of an affair which had caused no little surprise, not to say scandal, in fashionable circles in the capital, when one of the most beautiful and high born of Roman maidens had married a Jewish merchant. Prisca—for that was the lady's name, Priscilla being a half-humorous diminutive suggested by her unusual stature—belonged to the ancient house of the Fabii. This was one of the very few great patrician houses which had survived into the days of the Empire. Her father, a Fabius Maximus, who claimed direct descent from the great general who had been the first Roman to meet Hannibal in the field of battle without disaster, had enjoyed the perilous privilege of friendship with the Emperor

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Augustus, and had been brought to his end by his inconvenient knowledge of a State secret.¹ His family were naturally out of favour with Augustus' successor, and had suffered both in property and in social position. Still, it had the prestige of a pedigree which went back far into mythical times, and the young Fabia, who was a child of some three years at her grandfather's death, might have made a splendid marriage, had she so willed it, when the time came. But things were otherwise ordered for her. Her most intimate friend was a married woman, Pomponia Graecina by name, some fifteen years older than herself, the wife of a Roman noble, who was afterwards to be one of the most distinguished soldiers of his time.² The young Fabia was in her eighteenth year, when her friend's husband was raised to the Consulship. In the course of his official duties, Plautius came into contact with

¹ Augustus, who had virtually nominated his stepson Tiberius as his successor on the Imperial throne, was supposed to have contemplated a change before the end of his life. One of his grandsons, children of his daughter Julia, was living in enforced seclusion, on account of his savage and untractable temper, on the little island of Placentia (Pianosa, near Elba). A scheme for recalling him was set on foot. Fabius was privy to it, and it was the cause of his death.

² Aulus Plautius, who commanded the Roman force in Britain A.D. 43-47, and reduced the southern part of the island to subjection.

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a young Jew. The occasion was of no particular importance, a civil suit in which the Jew was a plaintiff, seeking to recover the value of some jewellery which he had made for a customer. The articles were exhibited in Court, and the Consul was struck with the elegance of design and the delicacy of workmanship which they displayed. He gave the young man a commission, and the commission brought him in course of time to the Consul's private residence. The jewellery was naturally submitted to the Consul's wife. Fabia happened to be visiting her friend when the Jew with his wares was introduced. Both ladies were struck with a novel design which they saw repeated on some of the articles, familiar enough to us, but then a novelty even among Christians, and of course absolutely strange to any one outside the narrow circle of believers.¹

The young Jew—I may say at once that he was Aquila—was not prepared for questions on the subject. In fact, it was by an oversight that the article in question had been included in the parcel, and he endeavoured to evade the subject. It was easy to see, however, that the questions were not put from mere idle curiosity. Pomponia had for some years been attracted by what she

¹ I mean the symbol known as the Fish—IXΘYS—I (ἰσους)
X (χιλος) Θ (εος)

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had heard of the Jewish faith. It may be easily understood that the religious traditions in which she had been brought up failed to satisfy her. It was indeed almost impossible for a Roman man or woman of the time to be at once intelligent and devout. The old Italian faith, which was an elaborate nature-worship, in which every process or development of life had its presiding deity, had passed away. The gods and goddesses which Rome worshipped were practically those which the Greek literature had personified, being greater than man in strength and beauty, but below him in morals.¹

The one characteristic Roman worship was that of the Deified Augustus, with whom were associated other princes of the Imperial house. Pomponia had not broken with the ordinary observances of private and public religion. At home she hung the usual garland on the family Lar, and saw that the usual offerings of food were placed before the image ; in public, she attended such festivals as public opinion, now grown very lax in such matters, made obligatory. But these

¹ The deities of the Roman poets, notably of Virgil, are practically Greek in character. Jupiter Capitolinus has become degraded to the level of the Olympian Zeus with all his lusts and caprices.

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devotions were perfunctory ; her real thoughts in this province of her life were very different. What she heard from the Jew gave to these thoughts a definite shape. Little, of course, was said at the first interview. Aquila was naturally cautious and reticent. The Jew had every reason for not wearing his heart upon his sleeve, least of all in such a city as Rome, where the representatives of the official religion, augurs, and flamens, and pontiffs were so numerous and so powerful. But by degrees he took courage to speak more plainly and openly. As he set forth the Hebrew conception of God, the One and Undivided, the hearts of his hearers—for the young Fabia was not less interested and zealous than her friend—were greatly moved. The One Maker and Ruler of all things, dwelling in a serene region above all human passions, untouched by the anger, jealousies, caprices of favour and disfavour which degraded the gods of the old faith, yet ceaselessly careful for the wellbeing of His creatures, demanded and received their allegiance. As time went on, Aquila would bring a small scroll of his national scriptures, parts of the great work which we know as the version of the Seventy, the Septuagint. The two ladies were as familiar with Greek as with their own language, and they listened with rapt attention as Aquila read the pure and lofty

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precepts of the Law, the outpourings of the Hebrew singers, touching, as they have done in every age, the joys and sorrows of the human heart, and the sublime utterances of the prophets. And all this time the young Jew was himself learning. He had renewed at Rome a friendship of his boyhood. His birthplace was the ancient city of Cabira in Pontus, and his closest companion in early days in lessons and in sport had been a young Jew who was a native of the same town. Their lots fell in different places. Andronicus, who claimed kinship with no less a person than St. Paul, had found employment at Alexandria. There his surroundings had been, as might be expected, wholly Greek, and he had assumed a Greek name. Such a name was more convenient for business, and, we may add, more agreeable to the hearing than the accidental or intentional mispronunciation of his own Hebrew appellation. From Alexandria he had come, at the call of business, to Rome, and at Rome he had chanced upon, or, may be, had been led to a meeting with his old friend Aquila. But Andronicus had had experiences which had not been vouchsafed to his friend. He had journeyed to Jerusalem some ten years before to attend the feast of Pentecost, and had witnessed events which were to influence profoundly the rest of his life.

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He found the congregation or synagogue¹ to which he naturally attached himself (that supported by natives of, or visitors from, the two great Greek cities of Northern Africa, Cyrene and Alexandria) in a state of the greatest excitement. The preaching of a young Jew, Stephen by name, had moved them profoundly, rousing an angry hostility in most, admiration in a few, wonder in all. Andronicus was a devout soul, and he had the open mind which often goes with the devoutness that can pierce beneath forms and names to the very heart of religion. And he had had the immense advantage of hearing at Alexandria the teaching of the great Philo. Philo, though he seems never to have heard of Christ, did in a manner prepare the way for Him. Disciples who listened to him intelligently were prepared for the doctrine of a Divine Word proceeding from the supreme Jehovah. The preaching of Stephen put their vague ideas into shape. This Divine Word had actually dwelt upon earth; he was the Master to whom Stephen and his fellow

¹ I follow the opinion that two synagogues of Greek-speaking Jews are mentioned in Acts vi., one including the visitors from Cyrene and Alexandria, the other those from Cilicia (in which Tarsus, of course, would be included) and Asia (the Roman province of that name comprising the north-west corner of Asia Minor).

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believers—"the Way," as they had come to be called in Jerusalem—proclaimed their allegiance. Every time that Andronicus listened to the fervent eloquence of the young preacher, his conviction that the hope of the Hebrew race had found its fulfilment grew stronger. Then came the tragical end, the savage outburst which seemed to silence this wonderful voice, but in reality gave it new power and a wider audience. Andronicus was present when the sudden rage of the crowd vented itself upon the man whom it could not silence by argument. He was carried, against his will, by the rush of the angry multitude into the meeting place of the Seventy. There he had seen the face of the accused glowing with a noble rage,¹ and had listened to the great defence which the impetuosity of the orator so soon turned into a great attack. His voice, with the voices of a few companions who sympathized with him, were raised in ineffectual protest against the savage cries which clamoured for the speaker's

¹ Compare the words (probably derived by Luke from St. Paul, who then related an experience of his own), "And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel," with St. Matthew's account of the descent of the angel at the Resurrection (xxviii. 3): "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men."

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death. He had even followed in the faint hope of rescuing the victim. Then he had been present at the last scene, and if anything had been wanting to complete the conviction that he had been listening to a messenger of God he found it then, in the majestic patience, in the divine forgiveness of the sufferer, in the irresistible appeal which no one who was present could ever have forgotten to a King throned far above the tumults of earth. Andronicus resolved at once to learn all that could be learnt about a matter in which he was so deeply interested. This for a time he found no easy task. There was a general flight of Christians from the city; those who remained were cautious of entering into communication with an unknown inquirer who might only be seeking to entrap them. But there were some who neither deserted their post, nor shunned any opportunity of avowing the Faith. The Apostles, protected by the reverence in which they were held, and possibly by their habit of devout attendance at the Temple, still remained in Jerusalem. Philip, whose Greek name seemed to indicate him as a proper person to approach, made no difficulty about seeing the young Alexandrian, and answering all his questions. For the next few weeks, Andronicus, as may easily be supposed, could think of nothing else. Day after day he

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sat at the apostles' feet and listened eagerly to the story of the Master's life, impressive beyond all that we can conceive when heard from the lips of an eye witness. When the time came for him to return to his home, whither he was called on business that could not be any longer postponed, he petitioned to be admitted to baptism, nor did the apostles find any difficulty in granting the request of a disciple so well instructed, so intelligent, so thoroughly in earnest.

It was a momentous event, therefore, for themselves and for others when the two natives of Cabira happened to meet in the streets at Rome. This meeting took place, it has been said, some time after Aquila's acquaintance with the two Roman ladies had begun. It was not long before the newcomer's experiences at Jerusalem were made known to his friend. Andronicus had committed to writing as much as he had been able of Philip's reminiscences and instructions, and he lost no time in giving Aquila the benefit of what he himself prized so highly. Aquila listened with eager attention; what he heard seemed at once new and familiar. It was familiar because it seemed to put old hopes and longings into shape; it was new because the shape had a reality and an attraction such as far transcended his largest imaginings. One of his first thoughts was to

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communicate his own knowledge to Pomponia and Fabia. He asked leave to bring Andronicus with him on his next visit, and the permission was gladly given. The two ladies listened to the story with the same rapt attention which Aquila had given it, and it had the same convincing effect. But when it came to the question how the conviction thus wrought was to take shape in action, the situation that presented itself was perplexing. Pomponia could not see her way plain before her. Her husband held high office in the State, and as a soldier of distinction and experience, was a confidential counsellor of the Emperor. Claudius, well meaning, though weak, was already too much under the dominion of unworthy favourites, and it seemed to her a lamentable thing to do anything that would weaken her husband's more salutary influence. And she was convinced that such a result would follow were she to make open profession of her new belief. Perhaps she would have done better to have ventured all, but if she held back it was not from any fear of consequences to herself, but because she had a profound faith in her husband and in what he would do for Rome. Fabia had no such ties. She was almost alone in the world, and had consequently far more practical independence than a woman could commonly hope to have in Rome. She

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made up her mind to be baptized—and after ? Then her difficulties began. For an unmarried woman to live alone in Rome was practically impossible. She had suitors, for she was of the noblest blood in Rome, she was beautiful, and she had an adequate, even a large fortune. But her suitors were, of course, of the old faith. The Christian minister whose counsel she sought confirmed her own conviction that marriage with a Pagan was impossible. The suitor might promise, but the husband would not be likely, probably would not be able, to perform.

At this point Pomponia had a sudden impulse to intervene. Why should not her young friend find one who would be at once husband, protector and teacher, in Aquila ? The suggestion was startling, and at first distasteful. Priscilla had her full share of pride of race, and she could not relinquish it in a moment. That this daughter of men who had made themselves masters of the world should own as her own master one of a subject race seemed at first preposterous. But the thought that was at first so strange became familiar. There were at work the persuasions of her friend, always tactfully employed and never missing when an occasion presented itself ; there was the conviction that there was no better way out of a singularly difficult position ; there was

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the consciousness of the young Jew's heartfelt admiration, which he now ventured, at Pomponia's suggestion, to make a little more evident than he would otherwise have dared to do. And then, most potent motive of all, there was the thought that in what concerned the deepest interest of her life, the young man was in the fullest sympathy with her. To say, as one might say if the scene of the story were in the England of this twentieth century, that Fabia fell in love with Aquila, would be incorrect. This was hardly the way with a Roman maiden, and certainly not with Fabia. But she yielded by degrees to the conviction that the marriage was in the path of duty, and it was not long before she began to feel that the path was one which she would willingly follow. At the season of Whitsuntide the two were baptized. Aquila, who had actually been for some time accepted as a candidate for the holy rite, had delayed his profession till he could make it with the woman he loved. On the third day after, the marriage was celebrated. This was the Priscilla to whom Eleazar was now introduced.

CHAPTER III

Archias of Corinth

THE conversation that followed the introduction was profoundly interesting. Eleazar had much to say about his friends at Alexandria, about the other Aquila with whom he had been for some years on terms of intimacy, and many others, not a few of whom turned out, as so often happens, to be mutual acquaintances. Much was said about an eminent native of the city who had lately passed away, the great philosopher Philo. Aquila had made his acquaintance some ten years before, when he had come to Rome with some of his countrymen in the forlorn hope of inducing the Emperor of the time, the madman Caligula, to listen to reason. The unworldly old scholar, who, after fifty years devoted without intermission to study, had left the calm seclusion of his library to champion his race, and had braved without betraying one symptom of fear, the fury of the tyrant, had profoundly impressed all beholders. Aquila had been able to render some little service

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to the old man, who was in feeble health. He had supplied him with money when, in consequence of unexpected delays, his resources had failed, and had assisted him to acquire some rare books, treatises on philosophy and other similar volumes, to which he calmly turned from the thankless and wearisome business which had brought him to the capital. Eleazar, on the other hand, had done some business for him, after his return to Alexandria, advising him about investing some sums of money which happened to come to him, and finally acting as the executor of his will. From the man it was an easy transition to pass to the teaching. Eleazar had been deeply interested in this, and had had the advantage, thanks to the intimacy which he had enjoyed during the last year of the old man's life, of hearing it expounded in familiar language. He was therefore in a measure prepared for Aquila's application of its central idea of a Divine Word. He had often meditated on the great question, What is this Word? Is it Jehovah under another name? That there was One God and One only was the foundation truth of all his faith; and yet the sages of his race had used language which seemed to have at least a different ring,¹ and now Aquila took up Philo's great doc-

¹ So, "I was always before Him rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth" (Proverbs viii. 31).

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trine as his text and “preached unto him Jesus.” That he was convinced at once must not be supposed. The idea that “the Word was made flesh,” that God dwelt for a time in a tabernacle of human flesh, seemed at first almost shocking to him, habituated as he was to thinking of the Deity as dwelling in an unapproachable splendour.

When he was compelled to depart, for the talk was prolonged far into the night, and he was bound to present himself without more delay at his uncle’s house, Aquila had put into his hands a copy of the precious document which he himself had received from his fellow townsman Andronicus. With this precious loan Eleazar departed, and having begged permission, on arriving at his uncle’s house, to seek his chamber, devoted himself immediately to the study of it. He did not sleep till he had gone through it more than once, and after a few hours of sleep, he studied it again. As soon as courtesy permitted, and what was necessary in the way of business had been transacted, he hurried again to Aquila’s house full of an earnest desire to hear all that he could learn. The two—or rather the three, for Priscilla was never willingly absent when such topics were discussed—were deep in talk, when a stranger, of whom we shall hear again in the course of the story, was announced.

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“Don’t go,” said Aquila to his young friend; “we have still much to say to each other, and it is possible that I may be soon disengaged. May I ask, sir, whether it is likely that your business will keep me long?”

“I hope not, sir,” replied the newcomer with a courteous inclination of his head. “In fact, I may say that I expect that it will be speedily settled.”

The stranger was a Greek who numbered between fifty and sixty years, evidently a gentleman, and if one might judge from his face and general bearing, a man of intelligence, refinement and culture. He was a native of Corinth, a member of what was beyond question the most distinguished family in the city, that of Archias, the founder of Syracuse. Archias was the name that he himself bore, and he claimed to be twenty-second in direct descent from the first of the race. This took back his pedigree over nearly eight hundred years; but the family was really much older than this. His ancestor was the first of his race in the sense that he brought into it the glory of having led with success the most distinguished colony that ever went forth from Corinth to make a new home for itself. But he was then a long descended man. He traced up his line to Hercules, and through Hercules to the Olympian Zeus

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himself. Practically, however, the distinction of the Archias family depended on the Syracusan episode. Even when the glories of the great Sicilian city had long since passed away, the representative of the house held, both there and in the mother city of Corinth, rank with which no one could claim equality. And Archias the twenty-second, of whom, however, I shall henceforth speak without this cumbrous appendage to his name, was not unworthy of his place.

He now began to explain the business which had brought him to Rome and to the house of Aquila.

“I have the honour,” he said, “to be the chief magistrate, or *archon*, as we are accustomed to call it, of the city of Corinth. In that capacity I have to negotiate for a loan, and I have been recommended to you as a person who might be able and not unwilling to advance the money. Your name was mentioned, I may say, by our right honourable Governor, Lucius Junius Gallio. Let me explain the circumstances under which the loan is called for. It is our habit to renew every fifty years the various belongings of the Isthmian games which the city of Corinth has the honour of conducting. It is needless to go through the items at present. They are all duly stated on a document that I have

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with me, and which will be produced at the proper time, if the negotiations are carried to a successful issue. It is arranged that the loan shall be paid off by annual instalments of a fiftieth part, together with the interest on so much as remains still due. We thus distribute, as far as may be, the burden between this and succeeding generations. It is secured, I may say, on the customs and harbour dues of the port, or I should rather say the ports, for we derive considerable revenue from both seas. This security is, I can assure you, amply sufficient. One year's income, were it all devoted to this purpose, would suffice for the whole expenditure ; but, as I have said, we feel that what is to be enjoyed by the future as well as the present inhabitants of Corinth ought to be apportioned among all."

"This all seems reasonable enough," remarked Aquila. "If the sum you want is not beyond my means, the investment is just what I should like. I should tell you that the money with which I am dealing belongs to my wife."

There is no need to report the conversation any further. Archias produced his paper of particulars, as also, by way of credentials, a letter of introduction from Gallio. When the matter had been fully gone into, it was arranged that Aquila should either come to Corinth himself, or

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should send a confidential agent, and so satisfy himself by inquiries on the spot and personal inspection that all the circumstances were as the Corinthian magistrate had described them.

CHAPTER IV

A Bread Riot

IT is not to be supposed that so important an event as a rise in the price of wheat would long remain unknown in Rome, a city of which one might fairly say that it contained more paupers than any other place in the world ever had or probably ever will have. The private bakers, who naturally took early care to guard themselves against loss, had already been charging their customers more for the loaf. Other provisions, too, were becoming dearer. The question which agitated the multitude of people who depended more or less on the State for their daily bread was not whether wheat was dearer, but whether the public distribution of it would be in any way affected. This was the topic that was freely debated by the crowd that was assembled round the steps of the public bread depôts one morning some three weeks after the incidents described in my first chapter. Public opinion was, as may

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be supposed, fairly unanimous against any diminution in the quantity distributed.

“What is the good of telling us that Rome is the capital of the world,” cried a speaker who was evidently a favourite, “if we are not to get any advantage from the dignity? Of course the capital must be the last place to suffer. Rome is the mistress of the world, and it would be a poorly managed household where the mistress should be hungry and the servants well fed. If there is any shortage in the supply, let the country folk suffer first. There are plenty of ways in which they can make it up to themselves. They have got their gardens and their fields; they can hunt and fish; whereas we poor citizens have our bread and nothing else.”

This oration was received with shouts of applause, and an imprudently candid bystander who ventured to observe that a common calamity would have to be put up with by all was hustled and kicked and generally given to understand that his opinions were highly unpatriotic.

The system in use for managing the distribution of bread without disturbance or delay was that every tribe—the tribes numbered a few over thirty—resorted to a depôt of its own. Each man or woman entitled to share in the public bounty was provided with a ticket, and a tribe,

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which in earlier times had been an important political body, was now practically nothing more than a corporation of such ticket-holders. These corporations again had an informal arrangement of their own by which the distribution was made easier. As each must have numbered several thousand persons, there might easily have been no little discomfort and even danger in obtaining the allowance. To guard against this a certain order was established. The older ticket-holders had precedence ; and it was a practice for one man to act for others. He would go attended by two or three porters, and would so be able to carry away the allowances of a considerable number of ticket-holders. On the whole the matter was managed in a quiet and orderly manner ; at the same time there were no small possibilities of disturbance. In a time of excitement voluntary arrangements of this kind are likely to become ineffective.

The time of distribution was at hand. At a signal given by the sound of a bugle, the doors of the dépôt were thrown open, and the business began. It should be explained that the doors were approached by a flight of broad steps, up which each ticket-holder had to pass. As a matter of fact there were many buttery hatches, at which a considerable number of ticket-holders

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could be served at once. Passages were made by which those who had received their allowance could retire without interfering with fresh applicants. Not many minutes had elapsed before the first comers had been served and had made their way back to their fellows ; a few minutes more and the whole multitude was in a state of excitement, which became greater when one of the loaves distributed was raised on the top of a long pole, and so made visible far and wide. No one who saw it could doubt for a moment that the size had been materially reduced. This was not all. It soon became generally known that the quality of the article had been reduced as well as the quantity. The colour and smell of the bread showed clearly enough that a good deal of grain other than wheat had been used in making it. The worst fears of the crowd were realized. It was evident enough that the authorities had the intention of putting off the pensioners of the public bakeries with a smaller quantity than they had been accustomed to receive, and that the diminished ration was also of a less palatable quality. A Southerner, in whose diet bread is an even more important thing than it is to a dweller in the north, is particularly sensitive as to its quality.

It was not long before the excitement began

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to vent itself in the usual acts of violence. Of course the first thing was to make an attack on the bread depôts. The authorities had foreseen the probability of such a result, and had made preparations accordingly. Each depôt had its garrison of soldiers. They had been kept out of sight as long as it was possible to dispense with their services, but were now instructed to show themselves. The mob were for the most part unarmed, though some of the most turbulent spirits had provided themselves with bludgeons and even more formidable weapons, and at sight of the armed men it drew back. The excitement had not yet become so intense as to make it ready for so unequal a conflict. Then there was a diversion ; for Narcissus, one of the wealthy freedmen who shared the real though not the ostensible management of public affairs, was seen to pass in his gorgeous chariot close to the outskirts of the crowd. "See the scoundrel who battens on the hunger of the people," was the cry raised by the multitude in a hundred different ways, and an ugly rush was made in the direction of the equipage. But Narcissus was perfectly well aware of his unpopularity, and had made special preparations that day to protect himself against any manifestations of hostility. A strong escort of Praetorian cavalry was in

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attendance. They were riding at a considerable distance behind the carriage, so that an uninformed spectator might have supposed that their presence was accidental. But the officer in command was clearly on the watch for what might happen, and as soon as he saw the movement of the crowd he gave the order to his men to close up. Instantly the troopers put their horses to the gallop, and before the foremost rioters could come up, they had formed themselves in a close body on each side of the equipage. The crowd, baulked of their vengeance, could do nothing but give vent to a storm of shrill cries of rage and angry exclamations. These were redoubled when Narcissus was seen to salute the crowd with an ironical courtesy. Nothing more was possible ; in a few minutes he was safe within the strongly guarded walls of the Imperial Palace.

But the crowd was not going to be so easily mocked and eluded. The rioters were not rash enough to venture on a collision with the Praetorian cavalry, nor to break their heads against the stone walls of the public bakeries. But there were other bakers who would furnish an easier prey. Some of the creatures, thoughtless or malignant, who are always at hand to suggest some kind of mischief to an excited crowd, raised a cry of "Down with the bakers," and a rush was

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made to the nearest establishments. Some had been prudent enough to shut up their shops and remove all their wares ; others had sought and obtained the protection of the city-guards ; but many were quite unprepared for the outbreak. They were not in the least to blame, as far as the ticket-holders were concerned. Possibly they had raised the price upon their private customers before they had felt the pinch themselves, and while they were still using the stock bought at the old prices—bakers and other tradesmen were not above doing such things in ancient Rome, as they are not above doing them in modern London. Possibly also they had charged these same customers with an increase which more than made up for the market rise—this is probably a practice as old as the baking business itself. But they were not in the least responsible for the small loaves, largely made up with rye-flour, which had been issued from the public depôts. Their innocence did not protect them. The crowd had a bread grievance on their minds, and were not at all particular on whom they vented it. Shop after shop was wrecked, most of the spoil being as usual trampled under foot and generally wasted. The plunderers were not hungry, but angry. Then it occurred to them that spoiling bread shops and bakeries with a

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blazing June sun overhead—it was almost noon—was thirsty work, and that there were wine shops near. Against the wine-sellers the rioters had no grievance whatever, except that some of them might have been refused the amount of credit to which steady customers thought themselves entitled. But, grievance or no grievance, the wine shops obviously called for the next visit. Some sagacious dealers saved their establishments and part at least of their stock-in-trade by a liberal offer of free drinks to all comers. The rioters could not for very shame do any harm to a generous host who rolled a cask on to the pavement and asked for no payment for its contents. Others, who were more inclined to stand upon their rights, escaped less easily. Considerable damage was done, more by waste than by robbery, for the wine that flooded the gutter was far greater in quantity than that which went down the throats of the rioters. The disturbance developed in the usual way. The professional thieves and robbers who always lurk in the slums of great cities, creatures of hideous aspect who seldom show themselves to the light of day, saw their opportunity. Their thoughts were fixed upon something more valuable than bread and wine, on plunder that could be carried away, turned into money, and so made to furnish

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pleasure for many nights and days. After the bakeries, the wine shops ; after the wine shops, when the courage of the crowd had been raised to the necessary pitch, the establishments of the jewellers and the bankers. This turn of affairs threatened, as will be seen, the life and property of an important personage whose acquaintance we made in my first chapter.

CHAPTER V

A Desperate Defence

MANASSEH, the dealer and speculator in wheat, had other irons in the fire. He had a jeweller's shop on the Esquiline Hill, a quarter which, since the building of Maecenas' great villa, had become fashionable; and he united with the business of a jeweller two occupations which could be conveniently carried on in the same premises, banking and money-lending. The combination was, as may be supposed, productive of handsome profits, though not without considerable risks. A fashionable lady would spend a couple of hours or so in looking through Manasseh's stores, replenished almost day by day by consignments from compatriots settled in all the great markets of the East and the West. Not long after would come a visit from her husband, who would find himself at a loss how to settle the account. Manasseh was as ready to lend the money as he was to supply the jewels for which the money was to be paid. His prices

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were high, as they had a right to be where everything sold was of the very best quality and indisputably genuine, and he charged about fifteen per cent. on his loans; so he made handsome profits in both ways. Sometimes, of course, things did not turn out well. There were "sharks swimming about" in the Roman streets as there are in the Strand to-day; and Manasseh, for all his precautions, was sometimes bitten by them. But on the whole the Esquiline establishment, with its handsome shop front challenging the admiration of the world, and its quiet back door which borrowers found so convenient, flourished exceedingly.

It was now, however, to undergo one of the shocks which defy the acutest speculation, and against which no precautions can guard, an outbreak of popular violence. The rioters were pausing to take breath after sacking some half-dozen wine shops when some one cried, "How about the Jews?" The name was like a spark of fire dropped upon a heap of brushwood. It kindled an instantaneous fire. The Jews have never been liked by the people among whom they have settled. Their virtues and their vices have combined to make them unpopular. They are frugal, industrious and sober. It is only right that these qualities should have their reward;

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that men who possess them should get better places, earn better wages, save more money, provide themselves with more comfortable homes than their neighbours who spend up to the last farthing of their earnings, and lose at least a tenth part of their working time in riotous excesses. But those who fall behind in the race of life do not feel amiably towards those who pass them, nor is their animosity lessened by the consciousness that their defeat is the result of their own folly. A more reasonable cause of the popular dislike of the Jew was to be found in the hardness and sharp dealing of which some of the race were actually guilty and of which all were accused. However it came about, and whether it was deserved or undeserved, the unpopularity of the Jews was an unquestionable fact. The suggestion of the name had accordingly an immediate effect. In a few minutes there was a general cry of "Down with the Jews." It is probable that very few in the crowd had suffered anything at their hands, and that of these few scarcely one had got anything more than he amply deserved. But such cries may be uttered without any reason. The mass of the rioters had a vague feeling that things were in a bad way, and that they might improve if something were done. The leaders of the crowd had much

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clearer ideas of what they wanted and of how it might be got. The Jews were excellent people to plunder. The booty would be great, the resistance probably weak, and the chances of impunity considerable. Jewish plaintiffs were not popular in the courts, and magistrates had been known to dismiss their complaints even when they were supported by unimpeachable testimony.

The crowd was prepared to act, but it still wanted a leader. "Down with the Jews" was quite to its mind, but where was the work to begin? The crowd was not long left in doubt. A stout rioter, who had been very busy in plundering the wine shops, and showed sufficient proof of his zeal, was ready with a suggestion. The fellow had been a porter, and had been employed by Manasseh, who was unreasonable enough to expect an equivalent in work for what he paid in wages.

Gutta — this was the man's name — would never have done a stroke of work if he could have relied on the State for wine as well as bread. He thought this below the dignity of a free-born Roman, and resented the interference. He resigned his situation with all the dignity of one of the masters of the world, and waited an opportunity of making himself even with his tyrannical

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employer. And now, he thought, the opportunity had come.

“There is that Jew dog, Manasseh. It is he and his gang that have put up the price of wheat. The furies seize him and his small loaves and his rye bread!”

“Where shall we find the fellow?” cried a voice from among the crowd.

“In the Jews’ quarter, of course,” said another. “I know the place, a big house close to the river.”

There was a movement in that direction. But the porter shouted, “No! no! there is a better way than that. The villain has got a shop in the Esquiline full of jewels and gold. It is better worth our while to go there.”

A wrangle followed. One party was for the house. The Jew was sure to keep his best things at home. The other preferred the shop. Everything there, they argued, will be ready to our hands, while we may spend hours searching the other place. In this discussion not a little valuable time was lost, perhaps one should say gained, if we take the point of view of law and order. These were now to receive the help of an unexpected ally.

The Corsican captain of *The Twin Brothers*, who had found the time hang rather heavy on his hands, had happened to witness the scene at

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the bakery, and had followed the mob, with no sort of idea of sharing their plunder—he was far too respectable for that—but in the hope of finding amusement and possibly adventure. He was sitting in the wine shop of a compatriot, whose property he had helped to preserve, when his ears caught the name of Manasseh. He had the ready intelligence that marks the successful man of action, and he at once comprehended the situation. He had a shrewd suspicion that the porter would have his way, and that the Esquiline shop would be the first object of attack. If he was wrong, and the house by the river was attacked, the mistake would not matter much. There was less property there that could be easily plundered, and there would be men to guard it. The shop, on the other hand, was full of valuables. He arrived at this conclusion after a few moments' thought, and when he had arrived he acted immediately. He enlisted on his side two stout lads, sons of the Corsican innkeeper, and hurried with them to the shop. Manasseh and Raphael were both there. The Jews, as usual, were admirably served in the way of intelligence. They had suspected for some days that trouble was brewing; they had had early information of the outbreak; experience had taught them what direction it would certainly

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take, and they knew as well as the porter, and probably better, that the shop in the Esquiline was their vulnerable point. The place was not incapable of being defended. The front, where the jewellery was commonly displayed, was protected by strong iron guards, which had by this time been made fast; the door in the rear was strongly plated with iron and the windows were heavily barred. Unfortunately there was next to nothing of a defending force. The slaves could not be trusted. No slave, in fact, was ever allowed to go near the establishment on the Esquiline. No master could quite rely on his bondservants—a Jewish master least of all. One middle-aged man of Jewish birth lived at the place, and he was helped by a hired lad. Manasseh and his son, therefore, though they were determined to defend the place to the utmost, did not take a cheerful view of the future. Great, therefore, was their relief when they saw the Corsican captain and his companions, though their arrival confirmed their fears, if indeed they needed any confirming, that an attack was imminent. A plan of defence was immediately arranged, Manasseh handing over the chief command to the Corsican. As a rule a sailor is better suited than most men to deal with emergencies, and the Corsican in particular

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was one of those men who leave an almost instantaneous impression of capacity and power on all who come in contact with them. The least defensible part of the building was a small door in front. The shop window was well protected, as has been said; but there was an ordinary door, provided indeed with bolts and a bar of the ordinary kind, but not stout enough to resist for any length of time a determined assault. Here, then, the Corsican took up his post, having on his side one of his two companions; the other he stationed in an upper room which was immediately over the door. These arrangements had scarcely been completed when the rioters appeared. Apparently they had not expected anything like a determined resistance. One reckless fellow, anxious, apparently, to have a first hand in the plunder, pushed up against the door, as if he expected to find that it had not even been bolted and barred. The young Corsican, who was in the upper room, protected from sight by the construction of the window, and who was armed with a bow and arrows, immediately seized the opportunity. He took deliberate aim, and shot his arrow through the open lattice. The missile struck the fellow full in the neck and felled him to the ground. The crowd fell back some paces in dismay. A pause of a few minutes

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ensued, used by the assailants in rigging up a rude battering ram. This, however, they did not bring into action without further loss. A second man was mortally wounded ; a third and a fourth received severe injuries. But the attack was not repulsed by these losses. The amateur robbers, if one may use this term, were driven off, but the professionals came to the front. Another and more determined charge was made with the battering ram, and the door was broken down. But the little garrison behind was prepared for the result, which indeed they had seen to be inevitable. The captain, who had armed himself with a huge battleaxe, brought the weapon down with fatal effect on the head of the first man who ventured to cross the threshold ; his younger companion ran a long Gallic sword into the body of the second. The two corpses blocked the entry, and the archer above availed himself of the block thus caused to discharge yet more of his deadly shafts. The attack on the front was for a time effectually checked.

In the rear the defence was not so successful. The door and the window were, as has been said, well protected, but there was a side yard, approached by a narrow passage, which opened out on the street some distance lower down. The captain, to whom the locality was quite



THE ATTACK ON MANASSEH'S HOUSE.

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strange, knew nothing about it ; Manasseh and Raphael had forgotten its existence in the hurry of the moment. But the porter knew it well, and when the front attack had been so disastrously repulsed, had bethought himself of making it useful. The movement was for a time successful. The passage was unguarded, and the assailants, nearly a score in number, found themselves in the yard without loss. Here, indeed, there was a brief check. The only communication between the yard and the house was an opening not unlike a buttery hatch. This was, of course, too small for a man to pass through, but as the wall round was of timber only, it admitted of being easily enlarged. Two or three of the assailants set about doing this. While they were thus engaged, Manasseh struck at one of them with a spear from the inside, and wounded him severely. In so doing, however, he exposed himself to a similar thrust from outside, and the opportunity was not lost. He received a wound in his side, and Raphael himself was touched, though but slightly, as he dragged the old man away from the opening. Meanwhile the timber, though sufficiently stout, was giving away under the repeated blows that were dealt on it. Raphael, though loath to call his stout ally, the Corsican, from a post where his prowess was,

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he well knew, sorely needed, felt that he had no alternative. His father was absolutely helpless, and he was himself, if not disabled, somewhat crippled. His halloo was immediately answered by the captain in person. The man, who had the eye of a general, took in the situation at a glance. He saw that nothing was left but to gain time. It was useless, he felt, to propose a parley. The rioters knew as well as he did that the guardians of the peace must come before long, and that when they came the game was up. No, there was nothing for it but to fight to the last; but how? and where? Then the thought flashed upon him—why not the upper room in the front part of the house? This was approached by a somewhat steep staircase, and a staircase was exactly the place for a defence when the odds were desperately large. He caught the wounded Jew up in his arms, and bidding the younger man follow, ran with him at a speed which would have been deemed impossible in a man so burdened, and got him safely to his destination. There was a reprieve, but it seemed likely to be but for a very few minutes. Happily, however, the defensive capabilities of the new position were not to be tested.

CHAPTER VI

Seneca

AT last, when it was almost too late, the guardians of order appeared upon the scene. The watch, or, as we should say, the police, which had the business of keeping the peace in Rome, was a military force. It was very effective when it was brought to bear upon any disturbances, just as the military is in our own country, but it was commonly very tardy in its movements. The men who constituted it were not dispersed over the city, but concentrated in a barracks. Much time was lost in letting the officer in command know that help was wanted, especially when the disturbance took place in some remoter quarter of the city ; and not less in traversing the distance between the barracks and the scene of action. In this case the movements of the watch had been even unusually slow. At first the officer did not understand that the situation was serious. Jew-baiting was a recognised form of public amuse-

Seneca

ment. The authorities did not interfere until the affair seemed so grave as to threaten the public peace. So it happened on the present occasion.

“Let them settle their own quarrel,” the officer on duty had said with a shrug of the shoulders; “it is six of one and half a dozen of the other. The Jew has been trying to cheat the Roman in one way, and the Roman to cheat the Jew in another; one asks double the right price for the goods, and the other wants to get them for nothing at all.”

A more urgent message, however, made it evident that something had to be done. A company therefore was equipped, as speedily as military formalities permitted. It had just started when a third and still more alarming summons had arrived. The men were then ordered to go at the double, and, as has been said, arrived just in time to prevent disaster.

The centurion in command found himself more interested in the affair than he had expected to be. In the first place the casualties had been numerous. Five of the assailants had been killed, and two more so severely wounded that their recovery was doubtful. The corpses had to be removed and the wounded carried to their homes, such as they were; the hospital to which they

Seneca

would nowadays be taken did not then exist. Then there was the fact that the owner of the place which had been attacked was a person of importance. Almost every one in Rome knew the name of Manasseh, and public rumour attributed to him wealth inferior only to that possessed by the powerful freedmen of Caesar. A millionaire, even though he was a Jew, was not to be knocked about with impunity, as if he had been some common man. Nothing less could be done than to provide for his safe and speedy removal to his own home. This was accordingly done, an escort, by way of greater precaution, being furnished from the company.

The next thing was to obtain a trustworthy narrative of what had happened, on which to base the report which the centurion would have to make to his superior officer. Obviously the Corsican was the right person to tell the story. The centurion listened to it with unflagging interest, and was not a little pleased to find that the man was a compatriot and even a remote connexion.

“I am heartily glad to make your acquaintance,” he said; “you ought to have been a soldier. Not one man in a thousand would have made such a defence; and your last move was a masterpiece.”

“You are very good,” answered the captain,

Seneca

“but I am well content with my own profession of the sea. I can’t help feeling that you soldiers are too much under command. Now when I am aboard my ship and out of sight of land, I am as much my own master as any man in the world. Not Caesar himself can meddle with me there. He has got his ministers and his wife and I know not who else to reckon with. No, no! I wouldn’t change places, no, not with Caesar himself.”

“Well, well,” returned the centurion, “we will talk about this afterwards. Come back with me to barracks after I have settled this business.”

It was arranged for the present that the shop should be put in charge of an *optio*, or deputy centurion, with a guard of five men. Raphael was to put his seal on such safes and lockers as had especially valuable contents. Future arrangements were left for further consideration. This done, the party bent their steps in the direction of the barracks.

But the surprises of the day were not yet over. As they were passing by the booksellers’ stalls in the Forum—traders were accustomed to congregate in Rome, as they still do to a certain extent in modern cities—they were attracted by the appearance of a particularly sumptuous litter that was in waiting in front of one of the stalls. The litter

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itself was richly upholstered in gold and silk ; the bearers, eight in number, were stout Bithynians, a race which it had been the Roman fashion to employ for this purpose for more than a century. The owner, a man between fifty and sixty years, was examining the contents of the bookstall, and talking to the shopkeeper, who stood by in an attitude of profound respect.

“That,” said the centurion, in a whisper to his companion, “is one of our richest men—Seneca.”

“What !” replied the captain, “is he back in Rome again ?”

“Yes, since last year,” said the centurion ; “but let us move out of earshot.” When they were at a safe distance, he went on : “He is in high favour now : Caesar’s wife cannot make too much of him. He teaches her son, is a sort of tutor to him, you know ; works with Burrhus, who is my chief, as I daresay you know. But do you know him ?”

“Know him ?” replied the captain ; “I should think so. I had the taking of him to Corsica when he was banished. This was nine years ago. I never had such a passenger ; he made trouble enough for a whole cohort of men. He kept on crying that he was the most miserable of mortals. What happiness was he leaving behind him ! To what wretchedness was he going ! For my-

Seneca

self I do not see that it is so great a hardship to exchange Rome for Corsica. You get a better climate, excellent hunting, plenty to eat and drink, only you must not be particular, and good neighbours, as long as you keep on the right side of them. However, that was not the way in which my passenger looked at the matter. If he had been going to execution, he could not have made more fuss, and probably would not have made so much. And yet he was what they call a philosopher. And what made it worse, he was terribly seasick. I don't know what that feels like myself. I took to the sea from a child. But I fancy that while it lasts it is as bad as anything can be. Well, I did what I could for him, and he was grateful, yes, and made me a handsome present; you see, they had not taken away all his money. He was not a bad fellow at bottom, but he seemed to me to make a great trouble out of very little. Give me five million sesterces a year¹—that is what I heard he had—and send me to Corsica to spend it, and I'll not ask for anything more. And so

¹ This would be about £40,000 a year. Seneca, afterwards at least, had more. In 58 A.D. he was said to possess three hundred million sesterces, which would be equal to nearly £2,500,000. This at eight per cent.—and capital brought in high interest—would be £200,000. Juvenal speaks of him as excessively rich (*praedives*), and his establishment was said to be more splendid than the Emperor's.

Seneca

he is back in Rome and a great man, you tell me. Well, I wonder whether he will know me again."

The two crossed the street again and waited outside the shop. Seneca by this time had finished his inspection of the book and was negotiating for its purchase with the shopkeeper. The business was quickly arranged, for he was an excellent customer, and his ways were well known. To offer a good price and to stick to it was his plan, and the booksellers had the good sense to fall in with it. He was about to step into the litter, purchase in hand, when he caught sight of the captain. He recognised him immediately.

"Well met, my friend," he cried; "and what brings you to Rome? What are you doing now? Still the sea, I suppose? You sailors are always giving it up and taking to it again.

Refits his shattered bark, and braves
Once more the vexed Icarian waves,

as Horace has it."

"Yes, sir," replied the captain, "we are like the politician who is always, I am told, forswearing public affairs, and always meddling with them again. And after all we must do something to live. It isn't every one that has all that he wants without earning it."

"Ah, you have me there," returned the great man with a smile. "But where are you now?"

Seneca

When I made my journey back from the place you know of, I asked the captain about you, but he could tell me nothing."

"I am captain and part owner of a wheat ship, one of the Alexandrian fleet."

"And it is just what you like, I hope?"

"Well, it might be better and it might be worse. But I don't complain. You see, I am not a philosopher."

Seneca laughed. "My dear friend," he said, "you are a little hard on me. But you know the wise man is always himself except when he has a bad cold, and, I think one might add, except when he is seasick. But I can't wait; I am due at my pupil's in a very short time. But come and dine with me to-morrow, and bring with you your friend, if he can put up with a philosopher's fare. Will you do me the honour of introducing him?"

"Caius Vestinius, a centurion in the watch," said the captain.

"You will be welcome, sir," said Seneca. "I am delighted to make your acquaintance. We are not half grateful enough to you gentlemen, whose courage and diligence enable us to sleep sound in our beds. On the third day, then, at four o'clock; you will excuse the lateness of the hour, but I am a busy man."

Seneca

With a courteous gesture of farewell he stepped into his litter and was carried off.

“That is a very polite person,” said Vestinius, as the two resumed their journey. “But I am scarcely disposed to go. I shall be out of my element in such grand company.”

“Nonsense!” said the captain. “There is nothing particularly grand about him as far as I can see. And besides, you must bear me company. It is not for a brave soldier to desert his friend.”

The rest of the day was spent in jovial fashion, and it was only when Vestinius was ordered out again on duty that the two friends parted.

CHAPTER VII

In the Circus, and Afterwards

ON the day that followed the events described in the last chapter, the popular discontent was displayed at the games in the Circus. Some pains had been taken to make them more imposing and attractive than usual. The wild beasts exhibited were the finest and rarest varieties; some performing elephants were to exhibit their choicest feats, carrying a sick comrade, for instance, in a litter on a tight rope stretched across the arena; some favourite gladiators were advertised as about to contend. But all these attractions failed to conciliate the multitude. The Emperor headed the procession in order to give further *éclat* to the show. He was received, however, with sounds suspiciously like a hiss, and when his ministers passed, a deafening shout of "Bread! bread! Give us our bread!" arose on every side. The Emperor, who knew, and, indeed,

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was allowed to know, very little of what was going on in Rome, was not a little frightened at the demonstration, and for that reason all the more angry. When he was brought to take an interest in anything outside his dining-hall and his library—he was as great a glutton of books as of dainties—he could show himself both capable and energetic. His ministers were not unprepared for the rare occasions on which their master asserted himself. They bent before the storm, which would soon, they knew, blow over, and leave them to follow their usual intrigues in peace.

“What is this about bread?” cried Claudius.

Narcissus explained that wheat had risen greatly in price, and that it had been necessary to diminish the allowance made to the ticket-holders. The explanation did not explain anything to the imperial mind. If Claudius had ever felt the want of money, and it is quite possible that he had in the days before he came to the throne, he had forgotten all about it. His ministers carefully kept all matters of finance from his knowledge, and he had simply no idea of there being any limit to what the treasury could or could not do.

“I don’t understand what you mean,” he cried. “My Romans must have as much bread as they want. It is not for the Augustus to

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chaffer about how many denarii are to be paid for this wheat that is wanted. I suppose that I have money enough."

"Certainly, sire," answered Narcissus, with a low bow. "Everything shall be arranged according to your Highness' pleasure. But meanwhile will you please to proceed to your place and give the signal for the Games to commence. Afterwards, if you will condescend to listen, I will set the whole case before you, and we shall then have the advantage of your counsel."

The Games, which it is not necessary to describe, passed over without any untoward incident, though the populace was obviously in a very bad humour. One or two unsuccessful and unlucky gladiators received a death sentence which they would probably have escaped had the masters of their fate been better content with themselves and the world. The comic business of the spectacles moved very little laughter, and their splendours very little admiration. But the whole passed over without any positive outburst, and the authorities felt that they had at least obtained a reprieve.

It was clear, however, that no time was to be lost, and a council in which the situation was to be discussed, and if possible dealt with, was to be held that very day. The Roman hours for busi-

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ness were very early, and it was only a very great emergency that could be held to justify so late an hour for meeting as the time fixed, 4 p.m. The Emperor, who was for once genuinely interested in the affairs of the present—the affairs of the past could always attract his attention, if they were sufficiently remote and obscure—took the hastiest meal that he had ever had in his life, without complaint, and presided in person. The first business was to make a statement of the affairs of the treasury. It was not complete, such statements seldom are, but it was quite sufficient to show the Emperor that the state of things was serious. It came upon him as a surprise; he had always entertained a belief, quite vague and unfounded, but never questioned, that the public purse was inexhaustible. His only idea now was to sell the gold plate of the palace. The ministers received the suggestion with due respect and complimented the Emperor on his generosity and self-sacrifice.

He was a true father of his country, who was willing to give up anything rather than that his people should suffer. They were equally complimentary when he suggested that he should give a public recitation, tickets for which should be sold at five gold pieces each. This idea was put off, for some sufficiently plausible reason. Then

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Narcissus gave his advice, introducing it with the usual assurance of submission to the superior wisdom of the Emperor. The substance of what he said was, that in his judgment the difficulty was temporary, sufficiently serious indeed to demand prompt remedy—he was too sagacious to minimize a matter about which Claudius, he saw, was very anxious—but not beyond treatment by temporary measures. There was scarcity, but it would pass away. Meanwhile those who had wealth ought to put a sufficient portion of it at the service of the State for immediate uses. “I will give,” he went on, “two million sesterces.”¹ The sum sounded imposing, but to any one who knew the circumstances of the case, it was but a small fraction of the wealth which, by means more or less nefarious, the donor had stolen out of the public revenue. Still it had a magnificent sound. Pallas, who was supposed to be his equal, if not his superior, in wealth, followed with the offer of a similar sum. Two other officials who had had fewer opportunities, though equal desire, for plunder, named smaller amounts. At this point the Prefect of the Praetorians broke in with a suggestion of a more radical policy. He praised the munificence of the freedmen, though he contrived in doing it to convey the idea which we

¹ About £160,000.

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know to have been perfectly in accord with the truth, that they were but giving back a part of what they had received or taken. "But," he went on, "their gifts will only help us for a time; we must remove, if we can, the cause of the evil. And what is the cause? I say that it is the avarice and rapacity of the Jews. Rome has never been the same since they began to settle here, and the more of them come, the poorer she grows."

One of the freedmen ventured to say that so far as he had an opportunity of observing them they seemed sober and industrious.

"Sobriety and industry," replied the soldier, "are admirable virtues if the man who possesses them is a patriot. If he is not, they do but make him more dangerous. These Jews are a turbulent, discontented and disloyal lot. I saw something of them when I was in command of one of the legions in the time of Caius Caesar.¹ They got into a state of furious excitement for some trifle or other, and there was very nearly a rebellion."

"My nephew," said the Emperor, "was, I think, a little unreasonable. He wanted to set up a statue of himself in their chief temple, and they objected to it. I cannot but think that they were in the right."

¹ Commonly known by the name of Caligula.

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“ You are very kind, Sire, to say so, but for my part I hold that the dogs should have felt honoured by the proposal. Who are they to flout at Caesar’s statue ? ”

“ My friend,” said the Emperor, with a dignity which he sometimes knew how to assume, “ you are scarcely an authority on such matters. But what think you,” he went on, turning to Narcissus, “ of these Jews ? ”

“ Sire,” said the freedman, “ I do not deny that they are temperate and hard-working ; but this does not necessarily make them good citizens or good neighbours. The fact is that they push our people out of the best places, and they make themselves masters. They have always got money at command, and they lend it. I know something about money lending ; I was once in the business myself, and I still have agents who employ part of my capital in that way. They tell me that in nine cases out of ten when they have an application for a loan, they find that a Jew has got a first mortgage on the house, or the stock-in-trade, or the tools, or whatever it is that the man wants to borrow on. They always take care to have the best in any matter they meddle with.”

“ But are they extortionate ? ” asked the Emperor.

“ I can’t say that they are, and yet they are

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unpopular ; of that I am quite certain, though it is difficult to say why. It would certainly please the people generally if they were banished from Rome."

"Banished from Rome!" cried Claudius. "That would be harsh dealing."

"I am sure, Sire," said Narcissus, "there are precedents, but your Highness is better acquainted with these things than any of us. Was there not something of the kind done with the Greek professors some two hundred years ago?"

This artful appeal to the Emperor's erudition had the effect which it was intended to have. Claudius mounted his hobby and was fairly carried away.

"Yes," said he, "you are right. One hundred and ninety-nine years ago, to be exact, the Greek philosophers and teachers of rhetoric were banished by the censors of Rome." He went on with a list of precedents which we need not be at pains to repeat, finishing up with a recent example. "As many living persons remember, in the third year of Tiberius, the astrologers were banished from Rome ; I myself have more than once contemplated doing the same thing."

By this time the Emperor had talked himself into a complete forgetfulness of the events of the case, and showed no hesitation in signing the

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decree, artfully made ready for the opportunity.

As the council broke up, Narcissus whispered to Pallas—

“After all, our millions may not be so badly laid out; there will be some shipwrecks, I take it, pretty soon; and it will be strange if there are not some valuables to be picked up on the shore.”

CHAPTER VIII

The Proclamation

THE Imperial Chancery was busily employed for many hours of the night that followed the council described in the preceding chapter, in multiplying copies of the proclamation by which the decree of banishment was to be made known throughout the length and breadth of Rome. The document ran thus :—

“IN THE TENTH YEAR OF CLAUDIUS DRUSUS NERO GERMANICUS, AUGUSTUS, CONSUL FOR THE TENTH TIME.

“THE EMPEROR BY THE ADVICE OF HIS TRUSTY COUNSELLORS HEREBY DECREES THE BANISHMENT OF THE PEOPLE KNOWN BY THE NAME OF JEWS. ALL PERSONS BELONGING TO THIS NATION MUST QUIT THE CITY OF ROME ON OR BEFORE THE FIFTEENTH DAY FOLLOWING THE DATE OF THIS PROCLAMATION. IT SHALL BE LAWFUL FOR THEM TO CARRY AWAY WHATEVER PROPERTY THEY MAY POSSESS. AND ONE SO BANISHED WHO MAY BE FOUND IN THE SAID CITY OF ROME

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AFTER THE DAY MENTIONED ABOVE SHALL BE LIABLE TO DEATH AND THE CONFISCATION OF ALL HIS GOODS."

This was posted up in all the quarters of the city. It so happened that our two friends saw it for the first time as they were on the way together to Seneca's house. Vestinius had been busily employed all the night in command of a detachment told off to cope with a great fire, and had been asleep all day ; the Corsican had spent the morning at Ostia looking after some necessary repairs to his ship. This had kept him so busily employed that he had barely time to keep his appointment in Rome. Accordingly he had hired a carriage which had taken him to the barracks exactly at the hour at which he had arranged to meet the centurion.

They had not walked many yards, however, from the barracks when one of the posters attracted them.

"By the Twin Brothers," cried the Corsican, when he had read it, "this is a disaster ! It means nothing less than ruin. What will my employer do ? Fourteen days to collect his property and to put it into shape for carrying away. Why, he could hardly do it in fourteen years. You must excuse me ; I must go and see him at once. And it makes it all the worse that

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he is laid up. They told me at his house this morning that he was a little better, but he certainly cannot be moved for weeks, and who is to manage for him? It would be a great trouble at any time, his being laid aside, for he is the only man who knows about his business from end to end; but now, I cannot conceive what we shall do."

"I can understand what you mean. But I don't think that it will be of any use for you to go to him now. On the contrary you cannot do better, in my judgment, than keep this appointment. Seneca is a great man; he is a power at court; if there is anything to be done by private influence, he is the man to help you. You cannot do better, I take it, than to ask his counsel."

The Corsican acknowledged the justice of the remark, and made no further difficulty about fulfilling his engagement with Seneca. It is not necessary to describe the dinner. If it was not sumptuous for a millionaire it was certainly elaborate for a philosopher, and the guests, if they desired to share an entertainment which they might look back to and talk about in years to come, had no reason to be disappointed. Seneca suited his conversation to his company, and seemed to have no difficulty in doing so. The

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sailor found that he knew all about ships ; the centurion discovered that he was practically at home in all the details of local administration. After dinner, when the slaves had finished their service and retired, the Corsican put before his host the case of Manasseh.

“ I don’t particularly like this people,” he said, “ but the old man has been my very good friend, and I should be sorry to see him wronged. His case is very hard. It is bad enough at any time to be driven from his home, and now, when it may cost him his life to be moved, it is downright cruelty.”

Seneca, though he was too familiar with the ways of courts, and had had too plain a lesson of the need of caution, to be outspoken, was very sympathetic. In the ordinary course of things he would have been invited to attend the council, and it was a distinct affront that he had been left out. Whether he would have been able to resist with success the policy of the freedmen was more than doubtful, and this in a way reconciled him to the neglect. To the policy itself he was wholly adverse. He saw clearly enough that the qualities that made the Jews unpopular went at the same time to make them useful citizens. If they were frugal and industrious, and keen traders and apt to make a profit out of any business in

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which they might engage, so much the better, not for themselves only, but also for the State. The Commonwealth, he was sure, could not afford to lose men of energy and resource and keep the indolent and shiftless. What if they did enrich themselves? they were benefiting the country at the same time, and this was exactly what the unhelpful and improvident creatures who resented their superiority were sure never to do. The question of the moment, however, was what was to be done in this particular case. After turning the subject over in his mind for a few minutes, he gave the result of his reflections.

“It is a very hard case, as you say, this of your friend the Jew, but I think that I can see my way to helping him. But first tell me, have you any plan of your own?”

“Well,” replied the captain, “I thought of suggesting that he should go with me on my return voyage to Alexandria. I am starting in a few days’ time and he would at least be safe with me.”

“Yes,” said Seneca, “he would be that, but Alexandria is a long way off. If the winds are contrary, it might take you a month, or more than a month, to get there, and a month is a long time for an old man who has been brought very low by wounds. Corinth would be better

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in every way ; it is much nearer, and besides, I could help you, as you will soon see. But first, will he be able to travel when the days of grace are over ? ”

“ It is very unlikely ; in fact, the physicians declare that it is impossible.”

“ Well, then, we must manage to get leave for him to stay awhile till he can travel safely. I daresay that I shall be able to interest my pupil in him. He is a generous lad, though the gods only know what he will become amongst such surroundings. Put another Cheiron to bring up another Achilles in these days and in Rome, and he would have as big a task as he could possibly manage. But at present, as I say, he is a generous lad. And then there is the Empress. She is generous too. The gods forbid that I should say a word against her ; she has always been my very good friend. I certainly should not be here, very possibly I should not be alive, if it had not been for her. Yes, she is generous, but it might be well to reinforce her generosity. Your Manasseh is a very rich man ? ”

“ Yes, very rich, though I don't know enough about his affairs to fix any figures. But I should certainly say that he is rich—yes, very rich.”

“ Well, it is not a case of money ; you would affront her by offering money. But she is a

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woman, and she can never have jewels enough. Could your Manasseh, think you, gratify her in this respect ? ”

“ Certainly,” replied the Corsican. “ I have a standing commission from him to buy what I think fit in this way, and I have had some fine things come my way in Egypt. Some excellent gems come down from the upper country ; and then there are some very precious things from the old tombs. Yes, Manasseh has as fine a collection of jewels, I take it, as there is in the world.”

“ Yes,” broke in the centurion, “ and it is my friend the captain’s doing that he has them now.” And he went on to give a brief account of the narrow escape that the Esquiline shop had had of being plundered of all its treasures.

“ Has he a son ? ” asked Seneca.

“ Yes,” replied the Corsican, “ and a very shrewd young man too, though not to be compared, in my mind, with his father. His name is Raphael.”

“ Well,” said Seneca, “ send this Raphael to me. We shall be able, I daresay, to manage something between us. And when the father is recovered enough, he had better go to Corinth. It is an easy journey to Brundisium. From Brundisium he can cross over to Apollonia, and

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a fast galley will make the passage in four-and-twenty hours, and if he chooses he can travel the rest of the way to Corinth by land. And the reason I say Corinth is this. My brother Gallio is Proconsul of Achaia, and he has his headquarters at Corinth. There isn't a kinder hearted man in the world, and I know he will do his best for any one whom I may recommend to him. Indeed, he does not want that—it is enough for a man to be unfortunate to have a good claim upon him. I shall see you again, but, as I said, send the son to me."

Shortly after this the Corsican took his leave, in much better spirits about his patron than he had had when he came.

CHAPTER IX

An Exiled Nation

NARCISSUS had prophesied only too truly when he had said that there would be shipwrecks in Rome when the decree of banishment was issued. The fourteen days' grace conceded was by far too short a time. It gave the exiles time to collect and secure personal belongings and portable property generally; but a merchant had very little opportunity of disposing of his warehouse goods, or a dealer of his stock-in-trade. The immediate effect of the decree, with its cruelly short limit of time, was, of course, to shut the market almost completely against Jewish sellers. The conspiracy of buyers holds good for a short time, though it is sure to break down sooner or later. It would infallibly have broken down before the end of six months if so long a period had been conceded. Some buyer would have applied the proverb that a bird in hand is worth two in the bush. He would have said to himself, "I may get nothing if I wait till the general

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scramble at the end ; but I may make sure of something now. I shall have to pay for it, it is true, but only half the proper price." And so he would have gone, stealthily, indeed, not without a certain approving glow of conscience. As it was, it was almost impossible for a Jew to sell anything. Probably the purchasers who thus held back made a mistake. The organizers of the affair never intended to enrich chance comers. The property of the exiles was to go into the public coffers ; and a portion did actually reach them ; but most of the cargo—to go back to Narcissus's metaphor—became the spoil of those who had brought about the shipwreck.

The loss as usual fell more heavily on the poor than on the rich. Great firms such as that over which Manasseh presided had taken precautions against such emergencies. They made a point of having a Gentile partner, who, being exempt from the action of the decree, took up the character of sole owner. Of course there was considerable risk of loss. The Gentile partner was not always an honest man. And there remained the great personal inconvenience, though always mitigated, as every trouble on earth is mitigated, by the possession of money. The poorer Jews had no such alleviation of their lot ; the small tradesman lost his capital, the artisan lost his

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employment. The Jewish race is patient and tenacious of life beyond all others, with a quite unparalleled power of recovery ; all the same it suffered a great blow, and the misery endured by individual members of it was past all reckoning. And there were not a few cases in which others who could have had no share in the supposed misdeeds of the people suffered along with it.

Aquila had of course to close his factory. He did his best to lighten the blow to his workmen. He had a branch establishment at Brundisium, and to this he transferred as much of his business and as many of his hands as was possible. At present the decree of banishment did not extend beyond Rome and its environs, and the provincial towns were comparatively unaffected by the hostile feeling that was so strong in the capital. Those who could not be thus provided for, Aquila helped liberally with money for their journey. Do what he could there was much suffering to which he could not minister ; but he made the lot of many much more endurable than it would otherwise have been, and Priscilla, it need hardly be said, did all that could be done to second his efforts.

One great calamity, however, they could do little or nothing to mitigate, and that was the calamity which their departure brought on their

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neighbours. A Roman poet, who was certainly not harder of heart than the average of his fellow citizens, counted it among the blessings of a countryman's life that he had not to feel the pang of pity for the poor. This was a blessing which Aquila and his highborn wife did not covet. The new sense of the brotherhood of man which the Christian faith had brought with it had touched them and made them active in works of charity, the works which are almost a matter of course in modern life, but were a novelty in the ancient world. The Jew had always been generous to his own countrymen, and certainly not less charitable than others to the stranger, but Aquila and his helpmeet set no limitations to their bounty. No Gentile workmen were employed, it is true, in the factory, not on account of any exclusive feeling in Aquila—he had mastered with marvellous promptitude the lesson that in the Master there was neither Jew nor Greek—but because he felt himself bound to respect the convictions of his countrymen. He hoped that they would reach a better frame of mind in the future; meanwhile he had to recognize facts. But outdoor work was largely done by Roman hands, and these brought him into contact with the poverty and suffering of the neighbourhood. There was not a case of

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destitution or sickness in the thickly populated quarter in which the factory stood of which he and his wife were unaware. Their visits were received at first with astonishment and even suspicion. "What do these rich people want of us?" was the question which many of them asked, and to which no answer could be imagined. A century before it might have been thought that Aquila was canvassing for some public office, some post, honourable and lucrative, which could be gained by popular election. But popular election had by this time become the merest show. The Emperor appointed to every office, and a handful of idlers who had nothing better to do with their time, assembled in the field of Mars, the scene of the stormy conflicts of old, to hear the names of his nominees. And then at last it dawned upon the people that these newcomers simply desired to help them. The notion was so new that it came upon them almost like a shock. The poor of our own day look upon such offices as their due; anyhow they are common enough to excite no surprise. It is impossible to imagine what a passion of gratitude was kindled in the sick or poverty-stricken dwellers in the Suburra, for that, the meanest region of Rome, was the quarter in which Aquila and his wife exercised their labour of love. They prostrated

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themselves before them, kissed the hem of their garments, and addressed them in language of adoration which, to the Jew at least, seemed almost shocking. And now when the news went through the quarter that its benefactors were to be driven from among them the excitement was intense. If Aquila had had anything of the turbulent spirit which was common among his countrymen he might have raised a riot, almost an insurrection. As it was, he did his best to comfort and calm. He and his wife would not forget them. Perhaps they might be permitted to return. Meanwhile they had left something in trustworthy hands for the relief of pressing needs.

That they could do this was a great consolation to the two. They felt keenly the breaking up of their life in Rome, especially on its side of active benevolence. But it was something to know that it might be taken up elsewhere. They had, indeed, liberty of action in an uncommon degree. Aquila had made savings which, though not very large, would amply suffice for a time, and Priscilla was rich. As much of her property in Italy as could be sold without exciting suspicion—and suspicion was an ever-present element in the atmosphere of Roman life, had been disposed of, and the proceeds had

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been invested in safe quarters. Some had been lent to private traders ; and here Aquila had had the advantage of that system of commercial intelligence which the Jews had brought to such perfection. Something like a gazette circulated among them, and a borrower whose name was unfavourably mentioned in it would only be wasting his time if he applied for a loan. More had been invested with municipalities, as ready then to borrow as they are now, in Greece, Asia Minor, Gaul and Spain. One loan, as we have seen, had been made to the city of Corinth. It had been arranged, my readers will remember, that the business should be concluded at that place, and this would have to be done either by Aquila himself or by some confidential agent. Corinth, therefore, was manifestly pointed out as a convenient choice, if a choice had to be made. What other interests would thus come into his life, Aquila did not so much as imagine. But the prospect of going there pleased him as much as any such prospect could please, when so many ties had to be broken, so many interests relinquished ? It was the seat of a busy and prosperous trade, and as such appealed to his tastes. Possibly he traced a parallel between its fate and the fate of his own mother-city, Jerusalem. Both had been made utterly deso-

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late, and both had recovered with marvellous celerity. On the whole, as he had to go, Corinth promised as well as any place outside his own land.

CHAPTER X

The Imperial Pass

THE bulk of the exiles naturally chose the Ostian route. Then, as now, it was much cheaper to travel by sea than by land. The wheat ships, too, offered passages eastward at very cheap rates. They were the most commodious ships afloat, and they made the return voyage mostly in ballast, for the exports from Rome were commonly insignificant, and never, certainly, equivalent to the huge imports of wheat. There was, therefore, ample room for passengers, though the quarters provided for them would hardly have satisfied travellers accustomed to the luxuries of modern liners. Then they were largely owned, or chartered, by Jews, and their destination was in most cases Alexandria, the second capital of the Hebrew race. But it is with some of the few who took the more direct route by Brundisium, the chief point of departure for the eastward-bound, that we are at present concerned.

Raphael had called on Seneca and had made a

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very favourable impression on the philosopher. The young Jew was a well educated man, and took a wide outlook on life; while, at the same time, the peculiarities of his birth and upbringing had left something highly distinctive on his character and bearing. It was the first time that Seneca had come in contact with a Jew of the better type, and the meeting interested him intensely as a student of human nature. Then, again, he was attracted in his character of a philosopher. Seneca was a Stoic in his belief, and a Stoic had more things in common with the Jew, as regarded God and the ordering of the world, than any other kind of thinker. Lastly Seneca was a great capitalist who had his investments all over the civilized world, and unless he has been very much belied, was somewhat fond of money, impoverishing the provinces, it was confidently asserted, by his usury. Anyhow he was greatly taken by the shrewdness and wide knowledge of the young Jew, in whom he recognized the acuteness and readiness of an expert in finance.

The conversation of course speedily turned to the subject which was the cause of Raphael's visit.

"I was much concerned," said Seneca, "to hear of your father's condition. How is he going on?"

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“Wonderfully well, for an old man,” replied Raphael, “but the time is very short, and we are exceedingly anxious.”

“I can receive him here, where he would have every comfort of nursing and attendance. Any one whom he might desire to bring with him would be welcome. The authorities would make no objection. In fact the decree of banishment would be suspended as far as he and his party are concerned. So much I can promise ; I have an assurance from the Empress that it shall be so. I understand, of course, that he must be waited upon by his own people. His attendants, therefore, would include any physician that may be in charge of him.”

“You are kindness itself, sir, but unfortunately the difficulty is not removed, and I am afraid is not removable. You see—well, my father is—well, shall I say old-fashioned ? He keeps rigidly to the Law, and the Law as it has been expounded and fortified by the ingenuity of generations of professional interpreters. As for myself I can’t hold with these ways. As long as we were in a country of our own they were all well, we could live as we pleased, and fix the conditions of life for ourselves. If a stranger did not choose to conform to them he could keep away. But that is changed. We are scattered all over the world,

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and I venture to think it absurd that we should try to carry all these safeguards and prohibitions with us wherever we may go. The curious thing—I know, sir, that you are interested in these matters—is that it is since this dispersion that these rules have been made so detailed and, if I may say it, impracticable. All this, however, is beside the mark just now. The fact is that my father would object as strongly to coming under the roof of a Gentile host, as he would to being attended by a Gentile nurse. And if he were to consent, which I may frankly say is impossible, then his attendants would object. No, I am at my wits' end. He must travel, whatever his condition, for there is simply no place where he can stay. His own house, or indeed any Jewish house, is impossible, is it not, sir ? ”

“ Yes,” said Seneca, after a moment's thought, “ I don't think that any Jewish house could be exempted from the operation of the edict.”

“ And it must be in a Jewish house that he stays, if he is to stay anywhere. That is my dilemma, and I don't see any escape from it. He must go, and if he goes, I very much doubt whether he will live to see Brundisium.”

Seneca reflected. After a pause he said, “ Well, as he must go, there is nothing to be done but to ease his going. Of course there will be a

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considerable crush on the Brundisium road during the next ten days. Well, I will get a pass¹ for your father and you and such attendants as he will absolutely want. I should recommend you to send the others by the Ostia route. My friend Burrhus, who commands, as you know, the Praetorians, will, I am sure, oblige you in this matter. Your father, I suppose, does not object to using one of our public carriages—of course he will have it all to himself and his own people.”

“We are greatly obliged to you, sir,” said Raphael. “This makes our way as plain as it can be made.”

“One thing more,” Seneca went on, as his visitor rose to make his farewells. “You remember the line—one of the wise utterances of the Pythian priestess, if I remember right—‘Fight thou with silver spears, and rule the world,’ but I dare say that your own wise men have said something of the same kind.”

¹ This pass, or diploma (a Latin or rather a Greek word, meaning a paper, or parchment, or tablet, folded in two), was a document issued by authority which entitled the bearer to be assisted on his journey in any way that he might require, with fresh horses, for instance, or convenient carriages. It bore the Emperor’s seal and was in theory issued by him, but certain great officials, among them the commander of the Praetorians, had the power of granting them.

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“Yes, indeed,” replied Raphael with a smile ;
“as the wise King has it, ‘A man’s gift maketh
room for him ;’ and room, I take it, is exactly
what will be pretty scarce on the eastward road.”

CHAPTER XI

The Gallinarian Wood

AMONG the families which were relieved by the kindly ministrations of Aquila and his wife was one which was always somewhat of a mystery to them. The head of the house was very rarely to be seen. On the very few occasions when the visitors caught a glimpse of him, he did not in the least resemble what one might expect in a dweller in one of the poorest quarters of Rome. He was a tall stalwart fellow, sunburnt to the very darkest shade that the complexion of a white man could assume, to all appearance a mountaineer fresh from his native hills. His wife was, or rather had been, a very handsome woman, a native of Minturnae, as Priscilla discovered by some chance allusion, for she was very reticent as to her previous history and her belongings generally. She suffered from chronic ague—few of the inhabitants of Minturnae, whether they remained at home or migrated to other regions, were exempt from this plague, which the air of the

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neighbouring marshes¹ had made endemic. There were two children, a boy and a girl, singularly handsome little creatures, but as wild as hawks. The household was wholly unlike the neighbouring families and emphatically a puzzle. Puzzling, too, were the curious vicissitudes of its circumstances. Now and then there seemed to be an abundance of means. The wife blossomed out, so to speak, in the gay colours and gaudy jewels dear to the heart of an Italian woman; the children were made as brilliant as a couple of butterflies. The daily fare of the family was copious and rich, and its plenty overflowed upon its neighbours, for Marulla—this was the name of the house-wife—was as generous as she was improvident. Then there were times of the direst poverty. The gay garments, and all but the absolutely necessary clothing, disappeared; the food and the drink were cut down to the very lowest at which life could be supported. Indeed, if it had not been for the seasonable assistance of Priscilla, life itself might have been imperilled.

Marulla was one of the humble friends to whom Priscilla paid a farewell visit. The woman's demeanour was certainly embarrassed. She

¹ Famous in history as the place where the great Marius, when flying from his victorious enemies, had found a hiding-place.



PRISCILLA AND MARULLA.

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seemed to be always on the verge of saying something which yet she could not bring herself to utter. Yet she was even more than usually affectionate. Her habit was to be reserved. Priscilla knew her to be profoundly grateful for kindnesses received, but the gratitude was not demonstrative. On this occasion, however, the reserve was broken down. When Priscilla was about to leave the house, Marulla threw herself upon the ground, clasped her round the ankles, and passionately kissed her feet, shaken all the time with dry convulsive sobs. Priscilla left her with an uneasy sense of unexplained mystery added to the grief which she felt at the breaking up of a life in which she had felt all the pure pleasure which waits upon disinterested kindness.

It was now the eleventh of the fourteen days of grace allowed by the edict of banishment, and Aquila had arranged to set out on the morrow. He and his wife were busy with their final preparations when an attendant informed them that there were two children at the gate who desired to speak with the lady Priscilla, having something which they must hand to her and no one else. "Bring them here," she said, and they were brought accordingly and turned out to be Marulla's children. The two, who indeed were

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inseparable, had ventured to come on an errand. This was no slight exercise of courage, for their home was several hundred yards distant, it was late at night, and the elder of the two was but eight years old. The boy produced from under his belt a scrap of paper, in which was written in scarcely legible characters, "Beware of the Pines of Liternum."¹

"Ah!" said Aquila, after briefly considering the document, "now I understand. Marulla's husband is a brigand. That accounts for his open-air look; yes, and for the short spells of prosperity which you noticed in their household fortunes. And now I think of it, I see how it was that he was at home last autumn. You remember how the praetor of the city was robbed actually within sight of the walls of Capua. That could not be put up with, even by our government, and they sent a large force down into the Pomptine country. Our brigand saw that the game was over for a time and came to

¹Liternum was at the edge of a pine forest known as the Gallinaria Silva. This forest and the adjacent marshes were the haunts of brigands. Juvenal, writing some forty years or thereabouts after the date of this story, says that the bad characters in Rome became much more numerous as often as the Pomptine marshes and the Gallinarian forest were held by an armed force; the brigands, driven out of their usual haunts, found shelter in Rome.

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Rome for a change of air. And now let us see what is to be done."

Happily the workmen in the tent factory had not been sent off. They had been kept back, contrary to Aquila's first intentions, to finish an order. Instead of sending them round to their destination by sea, Aquila resolved to arm them—all but one or two happened to be men capable of bearing arms—and take them with him by way of escort. He also sent word to such of his compatriots as he could communicate with at so late a time, with a hint that there were dangers to be apprehended on the route eastward, and that they ought to make preparations for meeting them. The result was that a number of parties that would otherwise have made the journey separately now joined their forces, and so made a more than respectable show of strength. For the first hundred miles or so of the road nothing happened that need be related. At Sinuessa however, the landlord of the inn, at which they stopped to bait the horses, described a party travelling, he said, a few miles in advance, which Aquila had no difficulty in identifying with that of Manasseh. There was an old man, he told them, who was carried in a litter and seemed to be in great suffering. He added that they had a government pass. He went on more—

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over to confide to Aquila his suspicion of the guide that was in charge.

“Rufus,” he said, “is nothing more or less than a scoundrel. He has the reputation of being in league with the banditti—we have, as I daresay you know, a great many more of these fellows in these parts than we like. They don’t harm us, it is true, but they destroy the reputation of the road. It is certainly a fact that several parties that have made the journey under the care of Rufus have got into trouble. This may have been an accident. If so, Rufus has been very unlucky, and it is as bad to be unlucky as it is to be wicked. But what is most suspicious in the present affair is that Rufus has persuaded the party to go round by way of Liternum. It was an easier road, he said, and with their invalid to think of, they would not really be losing any time by taking it. Well, I have lived in this country, man and boy, for sixty years, and I never heard of the road by Liternum being better than any other. But I have heard of its being a great place for banditti. The forest runs right up to the town, and the road goes through it for a couple of miles or so. What with the forest and its thickets and the marshes with their byways and their quagmires it is a very labyrinth. And the country people are in league with the robbers. It is a poor

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country and fever-smitten, and the fishermen and hunters and peasants find a few gold pieces mighty convenient."

"But if you knew all this," cried Aquila, "why in the world did you not warn the party?"

"My dear sir," replied the man, "you are asking a little too much of me. I would not harm a traveller for all the world: I never did such a thing in my life, and I never will. But I can't set myself against the whole country-side. As it is, I leave them alone and they leave me alone. If a traveller asks me a question I give him a true answer, as far as I know it. If your friends—I call them your friends, because you seem to know them—had asked my advice I should have given it them fair and square; I should have said, Keep to the old road, but I should not have said, If you go by Liternum you will very likely fall among thieves. It would have been as much as my life is worth to say it. Life at Sinuessa, sir, if you will believe me, is not worth very much; still I am for holding to it as long as I can. And now, sir, if I may make bold to advise you, I should say, Hurry on. You have got a strong party here, and will be more than a match for the robbers. Your friends will not be very much in advance, and you may very well

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come up in time, if they are attacked. Your good lady, of course, will stop here. You may trust me, sir, to do my best for her ; but if you like, leave two or three of your men by way of a guard."

Priscilla, as might have been expected, scouted the idea of being left behind. "You will want every man," she said, "or, anyhow, the more you can put in the field against these villains, the better your chance. And I, too, may be of use."

Priscilla had made the journey so far in a carriage. This was dispensed with for the present. The innkeeper furnished a rough pony, which she mounted ; and the party started without losing a moment. One thing became evident after some distance had been traversed. The guide had simply told a lie when he had recommended the Liternum road as especially good for travelling. It was a by-road and was not in the perfect condition which was characteristic of the great Roman *Viae*. This confirmed the innkeeper's suspicions. And these suspicions were soon to be turned into certainty. Between the tenth and eleventh milestone—the whole distance between Sinuessa and Liternum was fourteen miles—the sound of a horse urged at full gallop could be plainly heard. The next minute the rider came in view. He was a young Jew

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who acted as body-servant to Raphael, and was known by sight to some of the company.

"Thanks be to the Lord of hosts!" he cried. "My master and his father are sore beset. Those villains of guards have sold us. My master sent me back on the chance of finding some help. As I was riding off, one of the guards sent an arrow after me. By good luck it did nothing more than graze my horse's off hind leg. So it was as good as a spur, and he galloped faster than ever. But another inch would have lamed him. Hurry on, gentlemen; there is not a moment to lose."

Aquila took action immediately. Four of the party whose courage and presence of mind he had reason to trust were sent on at once on horseback to the supposed scene of action. Their instructions were to create a diversion rather than to deliver an attack. Their presence would at least, he thought, cause some delay in the proceedings of the bandits. The rest of the party followed with as much speed as they could accomplish. They had in fact but a very short distance to traverse. Half an hour's quick march brought them to a spot where the road entered the pine-forest, and in another five minutes they came upon a full view of the affair. Their own horsemen were drawn up across the road, confronted by a double row of brigands. On one side of the

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way the treacherous guide could be seen bound to a tree. It was afterwards found that he stipulated for this treatment, it being a matter of obvious policy to show to any spectator, if such should chance to present himself, that the bandits treated him as they treated their other captives. A closer inspection would have shown, first, that the bands were by no means inconveniently tight, that in fact he could release himself from them whenever the farce was played out; and, secondly, that his serene and even smiling countenance did not seem to express the feeling that might naturally have been expected under the circumstances. He looked like a man who had made a lucky venture rather than one who had met with a disastrous failure, the failure of the guide who had unwittingly led his party into the midst of a den of robbers. On the other side of the road might be seen Raphael in the same plight. His bonds, however, were as tight as they could be made, and there was certainly no smile on his face. Of the escort, all but three or four had taken to their heels: these were standing in the road, unbound, quite indifferent spectators, it might have been thought, of what was going on. The road itself was strewn with the contents of packages which had been unloaded from the mules. The robbers had been busily

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employed in rifling them, when the arrival of Aquila's advanced guard had diverted their attention.

The captain of the brigands felt, as soon as he caught sight of the well armed and resolute looking party under Aquila's immediate command that his venture had failed, and that the only hope for himself and his companions lay in immediate flight. He gave a signal, and in a few moments every man of the band had disappeared in the depths of the wood. Aquila did not care to pursue them. It was quite impossible for him to burden his party with prisoners, even if he could have found time to capture them. One man, however, remained in his hands, and this was the brigand captain. He caught his foot in the rope by which one of the mules was tethered to a tree, and fell heavily to the ground, spraining his ankle severely. The followers might be allowed to escape, but the captain was a prize which it would not be right to neglect. Three of the riders leapt from their horses, and secured him, while he was still breathless and faint with pain. When a few minutes later the captain was exhibited to Aquila he recognized at once the mysterious mountaineer of the Suburra. The brigand captain was no other than Marulla's husband.

CHAPTER XII

Eastward Bound

THE first care of the newcomers was Manasseh. The effect of the incident had been to bring him perilously near to his end. Weak as he was, he was not one to be still while so exciting a drama was being enacted round him. He was absolutely unable to move from his place ; but he sat up in the litter, poured out invectives on the villains who had betrayed him, and encouraged his own party to do their best in the way of resistance. Of course there was a reaction, and when the brief conflict had ended in the flight of the robbers, he was in a fainting condition. Priscilla had to use all her skill and all the appliances she had at hand—she was too good a woman ever to leave herself without some of the most important “ first aids,” as they were understood at the time—before she could bring him back to consciousness. His state was still doubtful, but he had a vigorous constitution, and what was not less favourable for recovering, an indomitable spirit.

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The next question that pressed for solution was the fate of the brigand captain. Some were for making short work with him. Why, they asked, should they encumber themselves with a villain who had plotted to cut all their throats? "Deal him," they cried, "the measure that he would have dealt to us, a couple of inches of cold steel."

Aquila was more inclined to be merciful. He remembered the poor wife. She at least had done her best to counteract her husband's wrongdoing; and he had tender thoughts of the two beautiful children. The Corsican took the same line for quite different reasons. He considered the gigantic stature and mighty thews of the prisoner.

"He is far too fine a fellow," he said, "to be made food for crows and ravens. In these times it is not a bad thing to have so stout a fellow on one's side, and you have got a chance of getting him. Make him swear by whatever he holds sacred—all these fellows have some oath which they do not like to forswear—that he will be faithful to you; that will be better than handing him over to the authorities, who in all probability are greater scoundrels than he is."

This advice prevailed; Aquila had, it is true, some scruples, but did not feel under the circumstances any special obligation to help the law.

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The brigand told them of a cottage in which he could be safely hidden till he was cured of his lameness, and to this, after he had given the most solemn pledge of good conduct for the future, he was conveyed.

The remainder of the journey to Brundisium was completed without any disturbing incidents. When that place was reached, it became a question what was next to be done ; the usual plan followed by travellers bound eastward was to take the shortest sea-passage—most landsmen think that the less they have of the sea the better—to Apollonia, and proceed overland to Corinth. But this necessitated more than one change of conveyance, and various other inconveniences, which the condition of Manasseh, who was still hovering between death and life, rendered peculiarly undesirable. Aquila, by help of some countrymen who were in business at Brundisium, was able to hire a roomy galley with as comfortable accommodation for travellers as any ship of the kind contained. With this they would make the journey direct to the eastern end of the Corinthian Gulf. The whole way would be by sea, and for the greater part of the way by the land-locked waters of the Gulf. The wounded man would so be left in peace, for he would not have to be moved till the western port of Corinth was

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reached. The old man was immensely grateful to Aquila for thus accommodating his plan of travel to his wants. While not at all superior to the love of money which is commonly attributed, though not always with justice, to his race, he was genuinely disappointed at not being allowed to pay the whole hire of the ship. To Aquila he was gracious, more gracious, possibly, than he had ever been to any human being before. He could not indeed help being suspicious of his orthodoxy as a Jew. Of his real beliefs he had, as may be supposed, but the very vaguest idea. That he was a disciple of a prophet whom the authorized interpreters of the law had condemned was enough. He did not care to go behind this fact. But he could not help being touched, not only by the services rendered to himself, but by the transparent goodness and sincerity of the man. His feeling towards Priscilla was less complex. The veriest churl could not have stood out against her charm. It cost him a pang to accept her kind offices, Gentile as she was, but he quieted his conscience with the plea of necessity. This done, he felt no drawback to the delight of her companionship.

Raphael was curiously different from his father, and yet even less in sympathy with Aquila. The old man had a genuine interest in the glories, and,

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one might even say, the mission of his nation. All this was to Raphael mere sentiment. A certain pride of race he had ; it pleased him to think that his ancestors were princes when Rome was nothing more than the refuge of hill-side robbers. And this feeling kept alive in him a certain loyalty to the national law. At the same time he was wholly worldly. Practically he prized his nationality, not because of any divine promises or privileges which were attached to it, but because it gave him a vantage ground for aggrandisement. He was excellent company ; shrewd, well informed, with a superficial liberality and width of view.

The voyage from Brundisium to the entrance of the Corinthian Gulf was as prosperous and easy as could be desired. Scarcely a breath ruffled the surface of the sea, and the sick man benefited greatly by the quiet. When the ship had passed into the Gulf itself, sea troubles and dangers might be considered at an end. The little wind that there was blew from the south ; it was just enough to fill out the sails and help the rowers along without raising a sea.

It was a gay scene that met the travellers' eyes. Visitors were flocking to Corinth for the celebration of the Isthmian games, and there were many who preferred the route by sea. Those who came,

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for instance, from the western Isles, from Corcyra—which had long since made up its old quarrel with its mother-city¹—from Ithaca, from Cephalonia, especially affected this mode of travel. The galleys and merchant vessels were all in holiday trim, newly painted for the occasion, their signs freshly gilded or silvered, and the masts gay with bunting. The fuglemen, who gave the time to the rowers, played lively tunes, and the high spirits of the crews prompted them to frequent races. For many of the travellers the voyage could not but be a melancholy business. They had been driven from their homes, and the future was more or less dark and doubtful. But even they found it difficult to resist the infectious gaiety of the scene.

¹ This quarrel may be described as the immediate cause of the Peloponnesian War.

CHAPTER XIII

Corinth

It was nearly sunset on the fourth day after leaving Brundisium when the travellers reached Lechaëum, the western port of Corinth. It was a busy scene that met their eyes. The harbour was crowded with shipping to its utmost capacity. The food supply of the city, with its population of at least a hundred thousand,¹ as very little wheat was grown in its own territories, was in itself an important business. The towns and villages that bordered the Gulf kept up a constant traffic in provisions of all kinds. Cattle and sheep were brought in the larger coasting vessels ; corn, poultry, market produce, and wine—the native growths were proverbially bad—in the smaller. The land-locked waters of the Gulf, which only grew rough when the wind blew strongly from the east or the west, afforded a safe and easy transit to even small boats. The city was famous for

¹ Forty thousand of these were free, 60,000 slaves. One account gives the number of the latter at 460,000, but this is a manifest error. We cannot correct it exactly, but the conjecture given is sufficiently probable.

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some fine kinds of tapestry, and for the celebrated bronze to which it had given its name, an alloy of copper with varying proportions of gold and silver, and it had the greatest share of the carrying trade between Europe and Asia.

The Jewish community was large and wealthy, as it was certain to be in any place where commerce was in the ascendant. Manasseh had, of course, his correspondents, who had been warned of his coming, Raphael having taken the precaution of sending a message by the shorter overland route. A litter was in attendance, and a physician, whose services however were scarcely needed, the quiet voyage over the placid waters of the Gulf having been of the greatest service to the invalid. Archias also had been apprised in the same way of the intended arrival of Aquila. Etiquette did not permit so distinguished a person as the chief magistrate of the city to meet a stranger in person, but he had sent a warm invitation to Aquila and his wife to consider his house as their home as long as they might remain in Corinth. Of this, however, they did not avail themselves. They were not willing to give offence to the Jewish community, as they certainly would have done by taking up their residence in what may be called the Corinthian Mansion House. They were aware, also, that many of those who would be

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going to and fro in such a place would not be as desirable acquaintance as was Archias. And above all they wished to be independent and to lead their own lives. Aquila abhorred above all things a life without regular employment, and proposed to himself to carry on, in however small a way, the business which he had been obliged to intermit at Rome, and Priscilla was intent on finding a scope for her own favourite activities. They had, accordingly, bespoken accommodation in one of the Jewish hostelrys, intending to look about at their leisure for a more permanent home. To an agent of this establishment, who happened to be on the ship, they committed their belongings while they themselves made the journey on foot, finding this a welcome change from the long confinement in the close quarters of the ship.

The distance between the harbour and the city was a little less than a mile and a half. The road was level and kept in excellent repair, with a wall strengthened by towers and redoubts on either side.¹ Some of the objects which would have attracted the notice of the ordinary visitor were passed unheeded or indeed with intentional neglect by the travellers. The harbour itself was dominated by a stately temple of the sea-god, Poseidon ; a

¹ These walls closely resembled the Long Walls by which Athens was connected with the harbour of Piræus.

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little further along the road to the city there was a shrine of the Olympian Zeus, and still nearer to the city, on either side of the road, were gorgeously gilded chariots, one of the Sun, the other of the luckless Phaethon. One object, however, Aquila and his wife were able to inspect with a good conscience, and this was the famous fountain of Peirene. It lay a little away from the road. The enclosure may have measured some twenty feet each way. All round it ran continuous seats of white marble. In the centre was the spring, a basin also of white marble, in which the water bubbled up continuously from some source deep in the earth beneath. The whole was shaded by plane-trees and limes. It was evidently a favourite resort; all the seats in the marble enclosure were occupied, while an unbroken line of women, young and old, were carrying away full pitchers from the spring. The water had a reputation, not only for purity and vivacity, but for its health-giving qualities. Inhabitants even of distant quarters of the city made a point of being supplied with it. It was even sent considerable distances. It had also the reputation of being specially useful in some manufactures. No Corinthian bronze was held to have been rightly made, if it had not been tempered in the waters of Peirene. Aquila was specially interested in

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seeing that some of the old *habitués* of the place were passing the time with a game of draughts. The sight brought back to him one of the recollections of early days when he had studied the literature of Greece. "See," he said to Priscilla, "how curiously it happens that some of the trifles in human life seem to survive, when the graver things pass away. There is scarcely a thing in Corinth now that is as much as a hundred and twenty years old. But the old men are playing draughts just as they did in Medea's time twelve hundred years ago." As he spoke two thirsty lads, fresh from their game in the playing-field hard by, came to procure a drink at the spring. "Why!" he cried, "there is another survival! Those two boys might be Medea's children, and that old man there their tutor. It is Euripides to the very life!"¹

¹ In the opening scene of Euripides' drama of *Medea*, the nurse communicates to the tutor of the two children (the tutor being not the teacher but the slave who looked after them as they went to school and came back) her fears about their future. She points to them as they are resting from their play, happily unconscious of the troubles that are near. He in his turn relates what he has heard. He had been at the "Draughts," where the old men of Corinth were wont to sit near the "Holy Spring" of Peirene, and had heard, while not seeming to listen, how the King of Corinth intended to banish Medea and her children from the city. The passage is obscure, but it is usually translated in this way, the spot indicated being called after the game which was commonly played there.

CHAPTER XIV

A Young Champion

THE financial business between Aquila and Archias was very speedily settled. Aquila was permitted to inspect the books of the two custom-houses, and found, as he expected, that the receipts were fully equal to what had been represented. He had provided himself, on his part, with bills of exchange, drawn by houses in Rome on bankers in Corinth. In the course of twenty-four hours the money was actually handed over. Much of it had been already expended, for time pressed, the preparations for the great Festival could not wait, and the Archon had taken upon himself the responsibility of ordering the necessary works. The risk, as a matter of fact, was of the very smallest ; so wealthy a city as Corinth would not have to go begging for a loan ; capitalists, instead of hanging back, would compete for the privilege of accommodating her. Still it was a relief to Archias, as the responsible person, to have the matter defi-

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nitely settled, and he was proportionately grateful. When he expressed his thanks, he naturally asked whether there was any matter of business in which he could be of service. Aquila, in reply, mentioned his wish to set up in Corinth the manufacture which he had been compelled to discontinue in Rome, and said that he should be thankful for any information or introduction that the Chief Magistrate could give. Archias could not conceal his surprise at the request.

“My dear sir,” he exclaimed, “you will excuse me if I say that this sounds to me very strange. You have just made a very considerable loan to the city, and this, I imagine, is not your only investment—excuse me if I seem to show an indiscreet curiosity as to your affairs—so that you obviously have a sufficient income at your command, and yet you are anxious to take up a not very interesting handicraft. What does it all mean, if I may be bold enough to ask the question?”

“I am following,” replied Aquila, “what is, I may say, the universal custom amongst us. There is no Jew, however rich or nobly born, but is set to learn in his boyhood some trade or craft. Perhaps I ought to except our priestly caste. With them it is not an obligation, though as a matter of fact it is often done even by them, but every one else, however assured his position, however remote the

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chance of his having to use it as a means of livelihood, is taught some craft. It is as regular a part of his training and education as are his books."

"Well," said Archias, "you surprise me. What would Plato have said to such a notion? He was against allowing the handicraftsman any share in the government of his ideal city. You have read the *Republic*?"

"Yes," replied Aquila, "I have read it with the greatest admiration, though I should not care to live in a state so modelled—nor, I fancy, would any one else."

"Possibly," said the magistrate, "but you will remember what he says:—*The really good State does not make the artisan a citizen.* What do you say to that?"

"Well," replied the Jew, "I shall not presume to argue the question with the greatest of the philosophers on first principles. It is not difficult, however, to make you see our Jewish standpoint. We Jews have always felt that our position was very precarious. We were a small people in a scrap of territory which might be set down and fairly lost in the enormous empires on either side. We might be torn away any day from our place and our belongings. What could be more reasonable than that every man should be provided with

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the means of earning his bread in any extremity to which he might be reduced. Your Plato, you will remember, acknowledges that a state cannot exist without the activities which these same artisans practise. This is our justification. Let us take care, we say, to provide ourselves with something which will make us useful or even necessary wherever we go. We may have house, land, money taken from us ; but the manual skill will still be left to us, and with it, whatever the circumstances, the means of making a livelihood. The practice was always popular with us, but it became a fixed rule after the terrible experience of the Great Captivity. And let me ask you a question. What is your experience as a magistrate ? Whom do you find the best citizen, the most useful, the most law-abiding, the most amenable to discipline, the soldiers whom Plato would have made dominant in his State, or the artisans ? ”

The Archon smiled, but did not think it necessary to answer the question.

“To return to the business immediately in hand,” he went on after a short pause for consideration, “I think that I see my way to helping you to what you want. There is a very respectable man who has a business of the kind you speak of, who is obliged to come to an arrangement with his

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creditors. It is not through any fault of his ; his health has failed him, and he will have to realize as best he can. His case came before me two or three days ago, and will be coming on again to-morrow."

A satisfactory arrangement was made. The tradesman in question was able, by Aquila's liberality, to make an unexpectedly satisfactory arrangement of his affairs. The business was handed over, and thanks to the capital and energy of the new chief, rapidly developed into a prosperous concern.

In one member of the family with which Aquila was brought into contact, he and his wife were more than usually interested. This was the eldest son, Eubulus by name, a remarkably handsome young man of twenty or thereabouts. Eubulus had been entered for the long foot race at the approaching Games, and was first favourite among those who were best qualified to judge of the merits of the candidates. Athletics could not be cultivated in those days without considerable cost, any more than they can now. The training demanded the candidate's whole time, and his usual occupation had to be suspended, even if he earned his livelihood by it. It was necessary to employ a trainer, and trainers who were necessarily more or less of experts made their fees heavy,

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after the manner of their kind. Then the actual food, which had to be of the very best, was a serious matter, at least to persons of narrow income. The ordinary Greek lived mainly on bread and vegetables. What we call "meat," as being the chief article of diet, was expressed by a word which really meant "relish." But on this the athlete had to live, and it at least tripled the cost of his daily fare. As long as Eubulus's father could keep his business going, these expenses were somehow met, though with a constantly increasing difficulty. When what may be called his bankruptcy happened all this came to an end. The state of affairs which had been as far as possible concealed from the young man was now a matter of common knowledge, and he was the first to see that his hopes must be given up. It was then that Aquila, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say Priscilla, came to the rescue. His private resources were more or less crippled by the events of the last few weeks; hers had not been seriously affected by them. It was her doing therefore, that Eubulus was enabled to persevere in his candidature. He might if he pleased consider the outlay as a debt; anyhow it was mere prudence to allow it to be made. What could be more wasteful than to let the expenditure already incurred be wholly lost? The young man could not refuse

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an offer so graciously made, and applied himself with redoubled energy to his preparations.

It must be allowed that Aquila was visited by certain misgivings when he found himself indirectly concerned in the matter ; nor were these misgivings diminished by the fact that he could not help feeling a certain interest in the young man's success. All his traditions and prepossessions as a Jew were adverse to the Games which figured so largely in Greek life. As a patriot, he could not help remembering that it was the introduction of this very thing into the Holy City itself that had marked the very lowest point of degradation to which his people had descended. Even when the armies of the Chaldeans "had made Jerusalem a heap of stones" the same depth of ignominy had not been reached. That was to be seen in the days when the High Priest of the time had changed the most heroic of Hebrew names for one of the least creditable of the Greek legendary heroes, had been content to be a Jason instead of a Joshua ; when a gymnasium had been built after a Greek pattern within the walls of the city, when sons of Aaron had actually demeaned themselves by running, stripped in the shameless Greek fashion, on a racecourse marked out almost within the precincts of the Temple. The disgrace had indeed been averted ; men had died

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rather than submit to the ignominy, and the reaction of patriotism and faith had brought about the glorious epoch of the Maccabees. Such thoughts troubled Aquila not a little. We shall see how he found a certain relief from them.

CHAPTER XV

Paul of Tarsus

AQUILA had not been many days in Corinth before he found that he was in closer contact with the new movement in religion, the "Way," as it is commonly called in the earliest Church history,¹ than he had been in Rome. Paul, the great preacher of the Christian faith, had been for some time carrying it westward. It had but lately reached Europe, and was but little known there, but it had become a power in a region which was in close communication with Europe, the lesser Asia. On the second day after Aquila had taken over the business mentioned in the last chapter, he found on arriving at the ware-

¹ So in Acts ix. 2. Paul goes from Jerusalem to Damascus with the intention of laying hands on any whom he might find in the latter city "of the Way." So again in Acts xix. 9 the unbelieving Jews are described as speaking evil of "the Way," and in xxiv. 22, Felix the Roman governor, is said to have more perfect knowledge of "the Way." The authorized version has "that way" in the passages; the revised version has "the Way" (spelling it with a capital letter).

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house that a visitor was waiting to see him. The stranger explained that he had business relations with Aquila's predecessor, and that he had come to find out why an order which he had sent had not been executed. He was, he said, a merchant of Ephesus, and his name was Trophimus. The business affair was soon disposed off, but not till the stranger had been favourably impressed with the intelligence and general demeanour of the new manager. Conversation turned to general topics ; and as various matters of interest common to both were discussed, was prolonged to the time of the noonday meal. Aquila invited his customer to join him, not a little to the latter's surprise, a feeling which he could not help betraying by his looks, though he was, of course, too polite to express it in words.

"You are thinking," said Aquila with a smile, "that this is a somewhat unusual civility for one of my race to show to one of yours."

"I must own," answered Trophimus, "that the thought did cross my mind. Of course there are Jews who are 'hail, fellow, well met' with any one who will treat them to a flagon of wine ; but they are not of your sort. As a rule, I much prefer dealing with men who, outside business, keep me very strictly at arm's length. It is not exactly flattering to one's pride, but

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then I find that these men meet their engagements and the others do not. But I know some exceptions."

"For myself," said Aquila, "I have learnt, I hope, a more excellent way. I quite see that our old exclusiveness had its use and purpose. We had to keep ourselves separate from the world, because we were taking care of something which we could not take care of in any other way. But that is all over now. In Him," he went on, speaking as it were to himself, "there is neither Jew nor Greek."

Trophimus caught eagerly at the words. "What!" he cried, "did I hear you aright? 'In Him there is neither Jew nor Greek?' These are the very words I have heard again and again in the mouth of one of the very noblest of men."

"And who is that?" asked Aquila.

"Paul of Tarsus," was the answer.

"Ah," said Aquila, "I have heard something about him, and have always wanted, I cannot say how much, to hear more. And you know him?"

"Yes," replied the Greek, "it is my privilege to know him. Indeed, I may venture to call him my friend."

"This," said Aquila, "this is the happiest of

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fortunes. But come, we must put off this talk, which must not on any account be hurried over, till we are more at leisure. The meal is waiting for us."

As the two sat at table, the talk naturally turned to the subject of the family from whom Aquila had taken over the business. Trophimus was particularly anxious to hear what had been done with Eubulus, "a most promising lad," he remarked, "and likely, according to all accounts, to distinguish himself greatly."

Aquila briefly related what had taken place, and did not fail to explain that what had been done in the matter had been done at his wife's suggestion.

"For myself," he went on, "I must own that I feel a little doubtful about it. Very likely you will think it a prejudice. Now what do you think your friend Paul would say to it?"

"Well," replied Trophimus, "that is not a very easy thing to answer. I cannot imagine him going as a spectator to see a foot-race or anything else of the kind. That would not be at all in his way. He has his thoughts wholly fixed on other things; he is not one who would dream of amusing himself in that, or indeed in any other way. But I don't suppose that he looks upon these things as wrong. And I will tell

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you why I think so. I have heard him speak of them over and over again. He uses them as convenient images and comparisons for the spiritual things which it is his business to speak about, and to bring home to the minds of others. For instance he makes a great point of discipline ; a man must not let himself be led away by the desires of the flesh. I have heard him, when he was preaching on this subject, use a metaphor which he borrowed from the boxing-ring. 'I buffet my body,'¹ was the term he used. There is another term of the same kind which I have heard him use, and taken from the same source. Our boxers have a way of practising their art at a lay figure or a post. We call it 'shadow fighting.' Well ; I heard Paul say that the disciple's conflict with enemies, without and within, was to be nothing of that kind. He was not to be as one that beats the air. Then I have heard him speaking of life as a training, as a race, where the runner must keep his eye fixed on the goal.² Now I don't think that he would use this language if he thought that there was absolute

¹ *Hupōpiazō* (ὑπωπιάζω) is the phrase used by St. Paul in 1 Cor. ix. 27. The word means literally to strike a blow under the eyes ; and is obviously a technical phrase which would be used by boxers.

² The runner, it was commonly said, was most likely to faint when his eye was turned away from the end of the race.

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wrong in these things. They don't appeal to him ; how should they when his heart is so taken up with his work ? but he is quite willing to make them serve his purpose in his own way."

"All this," said Aquila, "I am very glad to hear, and so will my wife be. It has troubled her that we did not quite see eye to eye in the matter."

This was the first of many conversations. Nor was Trophimus the only acquaintance with whom he discussed the same subject. Attending on the next Sabbath the synagogue worship, he was much struck with a stranger who had been asked to officiate. This man, whose name was Achaicus, was a Jew, a resident in another of the Asiatic towns which had business with Corinth. He came of a family of Scribes and had been educated accordingly, but had been compelled by various circumstances to follow commercial life. He was known, however, for his piety and learning, and on his not unfrequent visits to Corinth he was commonly asked to officiate. The Jewish community was wholly mercantile, and the persons qualified to lead the service were few in number. The stranger asked for the roll of the Prophet Isaiah, and read from it the passage which we know as the fifty-third chapter. The discourse which he afterwards delivered was

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full of significance to at least one of his hearers. It was not, of course, such as a preacher of the present day might find on the passage. A distinct and direct identification of the majestic sufferer described by the prophet with Jesus of Nazareth would have been wholly out of place. The audience would have failed to understand it; or, if they did catch a glimpse of such a meaning, would have been offended. But to instructed ears, such as were Aquila's, what was said had much meaning. He eagerly seized the earliest opportunity of conversing with the stranger, and heard more about the great preacher's ways of thinking than Trophimus had been able to tell him. It would not serve any useful purpose to attempt to reproduce the account which Achaicus gave of Paul. Much that he said had come to him by common report and was naturally inexact and exaggerated. We all know that contemporary history is sometimes that of which our knowledge is the least accurate. Anyhow, we may be certain that the narrative of the Apostle's faithful companion during the later years of his life¹ and the reference in his own letters to the Christian Churches give us a far better idea of what he was and what he taught than we could get from the impressions

¹ St. Luke, the author of the Acts.

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of one so situated as was Achaicus, however sincere his devotion. One story, however, may be given which, though not included in the authentic record as we have it in the Canon of Scripture, has an undoubted foundation in fact.¹

“It was in Antioch of Pisidia that I was first privileged to make the great teacher’s acquaintance. I had gone thither on business and found the city in a great state of commotion. My host could talk of nothing else but the discourse a stranger had delivered in the Synagogue on the preceding Sabbath. My host was a devout man, one whose thoughts were greatly filled with hopes of the redemption of Israel, and what he had heard had appealed to all that was best in him as nothing had ever appealed before. The stranger had, he told me, a companion, a man of most majestic presence and of a singularly benevolent expression. He had read the Scripture for the day, and had added a few words, very solemn and impressive, and delivered with an affecting earnestness of manner. But the other man was the great speaker. He was scarcely an orator; his style was curiously involved; his delivery harsh and ungraceful; his personal presence feeble and unimpressive. Yet his speech had irresistible power ‘with the storm of his

¹ See note at the end of the book on *The Acts of Thekla*.

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fast coming words like the drift of the winter tide snows.' There was a great gathering to hear him. The synagogue was filled from end to end; and outside there was an immense audience of Gentiles. All the city seemed to have come together. I never saw such enthusiasm. Every face seemed to glow with joy and hope. One might have thought that every man and woman in the crowd had heard the news of some personal good fortune. But you know that there are hearts which nothing can touch, and I am afraid that nowhere will you find them so seared and hardened as among our own countrymen. Well, there were some in the audience that day who heard this noble teaching with the blackest rage in their hearts. That day, and for some time afterwards, they could do nothing. But they bided their time. They went about with slanders and calumnies; one kind of ware for the Jews and one for the Gentiles. So they worked and worked away, till they turned the whole city, one might say, against the preacher of the 'Way.' Well; we have no right to be surprised. It is just what happened to the Master himself. One day all Jerusalem was shouting out 'Hosannah to the Son of David,' and two or three days after it was screaming, 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!'

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The end of it was that the two had to fly for their lives from Antioch. At my suggestion they came to Iconium. I thought that I might do something for them there, for it was my own city. Well, their enemies did not leave them alone. They followed them and laid charges of disloyalty to Caesar, and I know not what else before the Iconium magistrates. Then I put in a word; and did so, I hope, to some purpose. I had business relations with some of them, and they had reasons for wishing to oblige me. They could not very well dismiss the charge at once; but they did what they could. They committed the accused to the charge of one of themselves.¹ He was to have them in his keeping till they should be called upon to make a regular answer to what was brought against them. Now comes in the curious part of my story.

“Just opposite the magistrate’s house was the dwelling of one of the richest men in the city. The street was very narrow, you will understand, with just room for foot passengers to pass backwards and forwards. This man had a daughter, Thekla by name, a very beautiful girl who was

¹ This was a practice known to the Roman law under the name of *Libera Custodia*. So in our own history some of the bishops deprived after the accession of Queen Elizabeth were committed to the charge of the Archbishop of Canterbury and other prelates.

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about to be married to one of the most promising young men in Iconium. One night—it was very shortly after the prisoners had been committed—there was a little gathering in the chamber where they were lodged. The magistrate was there with his two grown-up sons ; I was there also and I had brought some friends with me. Altogether there might have been some fifteen persons. Paul spoke to us about giving up everything for Christ—money, family, home, all that was nearest and dearest to us. He was like to a man inspired, and his voice rose as if he were speaking not to less than a score of hearers, but to thousands. Thekla sat at the window of her chamber on the second floor, and she heard every word ; and what she heard went straight to her heart. It seemed to her like a message from God. A couple of hours or so later she went across to the magistrate's house and bribed the man who was in charge of the prisoners with a silver bracelet to let her into their room. What Paul said to her I know not. That he told her to do what she did I do not believe for a moment, but it is easy enough to understand how she may have come to think that he did. Well, the next day she sent for her betrothed. First she tried persuasion. Would he release her from the engagement ? She would not marry him ;

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she was called to other things ; she must serve God. All this was like an unknown tongue to the young man. ' Is she mad ? ' he said to himself. It might be so, but she seemed quite rational in her way of talking, and to be quite sure of her own mind. He did his best to persuade her, but he might as well have talked to a rock. Then naturally he went to her father. The father, an old man, passionately fond of his daughter, did all that he could to bring her to another way of thinking. When she was obstinately set on her own way, he grew angry. He would shut her up till she came to a better way of thinking. And so he did. But he was not thorough enough in his proceedings. He left her her jewellery, and with that the way of getting out of her prison. All the household idolized her. Very likely she could have got away without a bribe ; but with a bribe she was irresistible. One morning, three or four days after the beginning of this affair, she was gone. She had heard, it seems, that Paul and his companion, who by this time had been released by the magistrates on condition that they would leave Iconium without delay, had gone on to Lystra. She followed them alone. Imagine that ! a girl who had never been outside her home without two or three attendants ! I

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doubt, in fact, whether she had ever set foot on the ground outside her father's house and garden. Somehow she missed them. Possibly they had taken another route; possibly she had been misinformed. Anyhow she never came up with them. When she was about a mile from Lystra, the Eparch of the city overtook her. He was a priest of the local Temple of the Julian House—they have a cult there of Julius the Dictator and Augustus—and he was coming home from a function at which he had been assisting. He was wearing his priestly robe—that you will see turned out to be an important point. It was an amazing thing, as you may suppose, for a beautiful young woman, richly dressed, to be seen walking alone on the public road. He got down from his chariot, and asked her to ride with him. She refused. He put his hand on her shoulder. She turned round, and in trying to wrest herself away, she caught her hand in his robe and made a great rent in it. He was of course in a furious rage, and bade his lictors arrest her. The men handcuffed her, put her into a car which was following the Eparch's chariot and so brought her to Lystra.

“I don't know exactly the particulars of what followed. Thekla was brought before the Eparch and the other magistrates of the town. He

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was, of course, furious, and then she had certainly insulted a priest and torn the sacred robe. Still she had had provocation, and the tearing was plainly an accident. There must have been something more. She may have used strong words about the local gods. Even the Greeks, as you know, look down upon this particular kind of worship. It seems anyhow that there was some further offence beyond the blow and the tearing of the robe, for the sentence was a very heavy one, the heaviest that could be inflicted. Thekla was found guilty of blasphemy, and was sentenced to suffer death by being exposed to wild beasts. There was to be a show in two or three days' time.

“What was to be done with her in the meantime? The magistrates had some conscience; or perhaps her youth and beauty moved them. She was not to be thrown into the common gaol, but to be committed to the charge of Queen Tryphaena, the widow, you must know, of some Thracian king.

“Well, the Queen was much taken with the maiden. It seemed to her a monstrous thing that an innocent woman, who after all had done nothing but what became a woman, should be dealt with in such a fashion. She did all that she could with the magistrates to induce them to commute the sentence for something

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less shocking ; but it was to no purpose. The day came on and the theatre was pretty well filled—you know that such exhibitions are not to the taste of the better class of Greeks, but there are always numbers of brutal or foolish persons who would crowd to see anything horrible or exciting. The Queen herself went, not, of course, because she had any of this wretched curiosity, but simply because she could not bear to leave the girl to her fate, and she hoped against hope that even at the last she might be able to do something for her. When her turn came Thekla was led into the arena, and bound to a stake that was set up in the middle of it. One of the gates of the dens in which the wild beasts are kept was opened and a lion came bounding out. Then the spectators seemed to realize for the first time what was going on. They saw this beautiful girl fastened to the stake and doomed to the most horrible of deaths. A Roman crowd is used to such sights, but in a Greek city they are rare, and, indeed, would never have been seen at all but for the Roman rule. Anyhow, there was a great cry of horror, so loud that it seemed to terrify the beast ; at all events it stopped short, and stood a few yards from the door of the cage lashing its tail to and fro. Then there was a shrill cry which was heard above all the din.

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It came from the Queen. The horror of the scene had been too much for her. The next moment she fainted. Well, she could not have done anything more effectual to stop the affair. The town clerk whispered to the chief magistrate, 'This is a bad business, my lord. Queen Tryphaena is a kinswoman of Augustus, and if anything should happen to her, we should be held accountable. It is evident, too, that the people don't like it.' The end of it was that the magistrate gave orders that everything possible should be done to save Thekla. Happily this turned out to be a fairly easy business. The lion was somewhat cowed by the noise ; anyhow his keeper had very little difficulty in getting him back to his den. The girl was unbound and put in the charge of the Queen again, and remained with her for some weeks. During this time the young man to whom she had been promised in marriage was killed out hunting. This made the situation easier. Her parents were not bitter against her ; but as long as the young man lived, they could hardly help acting, for he belonged to a very influential family. She did not go back to Iconium ; that under the circumstances would have been hardly prudent ; but a Christian home was found for her somewhere. There she busies herself with woman's work among the poor of the faith, and is greatly beloved."

CHAPTER XVI

A Secret

IT had been arranged that Eumenes, the tradesman whose business Aquila had purchased, should devote a few hours daily to instructing his successor in various details of manufacture and commercial arrangement which it would be to his advantage to know. Eumenes belonged to the sufficiently numerous class who may be described as excellent servants and indifferent masters. He knew all that there was to know about his business, and yet had not been able to manage it with success. So lucid were his explanations, so full of common sense his suggestions, that Aquila could not but feel that he should miss him very much, and began to consider whether he would not offer him the post of manager. The experiment was not, however, to be tried. After a fortnight or so, Eumenes asked for an interview, and informed him that a very desirable post had been offered him at Mantinea, a considerable town in Arcadia.

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“I am really sorry to go,” he said. “I have never been so comfortable here as I have been since you took the place over. I shall always be grateful to you. You have been very generous in your dealings with me, though I do hope and trust that you will make a good thing of it in the end. And now, sir, I am going to ask you to do me a favour. It does not concern me so much as it does my son Eubulus. There, again, you and your good wife have been kindness itself, and so I make bold to ask you. I call him my son; every one thinks that he is; he thinks so himself; but he is not. When he was a baby he was put in charge of my dear wife, who has been dead these three years. We lived in those days at Sicyon, and when we removed to this city, and he came with us—he was then a year old—we spoke of him as if he were a child of our own. If you ask me whose son he is, I tell you quite truly that I don’t know, although I could know if I thought right. Let me explain. When the child was given into my wife’s charge there was sent with him a purse containing a hundred pieces of gold—I bought this business with the money—a document drawn up by a notary, and a casket. The casket and the document I have brought with me to-day. The casket was locked, as it has been locked ever since it came into my

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possession. When you read the paper you will see why."

Eumenes took this paper from the case in which it was kept, unrolled it and handed it to Aquila. It ran thus :

"For reasons which I beg Eunice and Eumenes to take on trust as sufficient, I give my son into their charge to be brought up as their own child. I am convinced that it will be for his greater happiness that this should be his lot in life. But I do not hide from myself the possibility that I may be wrong, or that circumstances may arise which will make it necessary that what I would fain conceal should be made known. In the casket that accompanies this paper are the proofs of his parentage. I charge Eunice and Eumenes to leave them undisturbed until the necessity shall arise of using them. Nothing, I am sure, could be more to my son's advantage than that he should live and die in ignorance of his parentage ; if, however, the necessity should arise, let the casket be opened and the instructions therein contained acted upon."

Eumenes went on : "I do not conceive that the necessity has arisen ; but it seems to me that it may not improbably arise within a short time. It may be that if Eubulus wins the race for which he is in training, he may be accepted without

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challenge as my son ; it is possible on the other hand, that he may be required to prove himself of pure Greek descent—no one, as you probably know, is permitted to compete in these games unless he can bring forward such proof. If that should happen, the casket must be opened. It only remains to show you how this is to be done. The lock is a letter lock, and the secret of opening it is the lad's name, Eubulus. Bring the letters into this order and the thing is done."

Aquila would fain have declined the responsibility, though he did not like to meet the request with a direct refusal. He did, indeed, suggest that some more influential person should be asked to assume the charge. He mentioned Archias.

Eumenes expressed unfeigned respect for the chief magistrate, but thought that there were serious objections.

"The archon," he said, "is overwhelmed with business, especially in this year with its special celebration of the Games. He is compelled to do much through others. Any specially confidential matter—and this is certainly of that character—would be better bestowed, if possible, elsewhere. I am sure, my dear sir, that there is no one available who could be better suited for it than you."

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Aquila could not but yield to these arguments, and had to content himself with the hope that he should not be called upon to act. That the transference of the guardianship was not in itself a sufficient cause for opening the casket he willingly allowed. After all, he thought to himself, of this Eumenes must be the judge; if Eumenes is content, he had no call to object.

Eumenes left Corinth for Mantinea the next day.

CHAPTER XVII

Jew and Greek

IT was the traditional glory of the Isthmian Games, as, indeed, it was of all the great athletic celebrations of ancient Greece, that the prize for which the competitors contended had no intrinsic value. At Olympia, the most famous of these festivals, the coveted reward of victory was a wreath of wild olive, cut from the sacred tree which Hercules was said to have brought from the happy land which lay behind the north wind. At Nemea the wreath was of parsley, at the Isthmus it was of pine at the time of which I am writing, up to the date of the second founding of the city by Julius Caesar it had been the same as at Nemea. But it must not be supposed that the victors in the various contests did not receive very substantial rewards. As early as the sixth century we hear that Solon, the law-giver of Athens, provided a bounty of a hundred

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drachmae¹ to any one who should win a prize at the Isthmian Games. In after-times these public rewards became more valuable. Prize winners became entitled to maintenance at the public expense in the Common Hall (Hôtel de Ville, or Mansion House) of the State, and enjoyed various other precedences and privileges. The result was that a victory became a very valuable thing, and in consequence the object of a good many intrigues and jealousies. And besides this there was a vast amount of betting about the competitions. Betting is a universal passion of man, civilized and uncivilized. It may be said to rule from the pole to the equator, but nowhere is it now, or was it then, more dominant than in the nations of Southern Europe. As may be supposed, it was briskly carried on in Corinth at the time of which we are writing, nor was there any competition on which more wagers were laid than the long foot race. It was a thing about which every one, it might be said, had an opportunity of judging for himself. The

¹ A drachma would be equal to about $9\frac{1}{2}d.$ of English silver coinage—the silver of which it was coined was without alloy—so that the bounty would be equivalent to about £4, in purchasing power to about £50 at the very least. The wealthiest class in Solon's division of the Athenian citizens, a division according to wealth, were those who had an income of 500 drachmae. This of course would be the minimum.

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boxers and wrestlers could not be so readily compared. Of course they were never matched against each other and their performances could not be estimated. As for the chariot races the teams which competed did not make their appearance till a little time before the actual contest, and they could only be judged by reputation. The runners, on the other hand, were daily seen at their exercise, and it was possible to get a good idea of their style and speed.

Eubulus was a leading favourite. He was, to begin with, a very handsome young man, and that always goes a long way, for

Worth appears with brighter shine
When lodged within a lovely shrine.¹

Then he was a Corinthian, or the next thing to one, as he had lived in the city ever since his earliest childhood, and he had the most charming manners. He had won, too, in the boys' race at Olympia. This, it was true, was not always an augury of success later on. Sometimes the successful boy competitor was overworked by these premature exertions. Eubulus, however, seemed to have escaped this danger. His tall, upright figure, fresh complexion obviously bloom-

¹ "Gratior et pulchro veniens in corpore virtus." (Aen. v. 344), used appropriately enough by Virgil of the beautiful Euryalus, who was a competitor in the foot race.

Jew and Greek

ing with health, and light springy step, had all the appearance of perfect condition. Every one who was prepared to risk a drachma was anxious to back Eubulus. This very wide popularity, had, of course, its dangers. Of one of these dangers there will be a good deal to say hereafter. There are always a number of unprincipled people who stand to make money by the failure of the favourite, and the case of Eubulus was no exception to the rule. A more subtle peril came from friends rather than from mere enemies. The young man could have had as many so-called friends as he liked. Many men of much higher social standing than himself would willingly have made him their companion. Some were attracted by his genuine charm. With many, the strongest motive was a somewhat foolish pride in being able to boast acquaintance with a public character. And here the friendship of Aquila and Priscilla was of the greatest advantage to the young man. He was profoundly grateful for the kindness which had enabled him to finish his course of training. Possibly the ambition to win might have kept him in the straight way, but the motive was reinforced by gratitude. It would be shameful, he could not but think, to do anything or omit to do anything which might hinder him from showing himself worthy of such kindness.

Jew and Greek

But what was of especial benefit to him was the intimacy which grew up between him and his two patrons, if they may be so called. It showed to him a home where every influence was for good. His trainer was a decent fellow, who was strict, from the business point of view, in keeping an orderly house, but the talk and the general tone were not particularly improving. Eubulus had to take all his meals there, and of course to sleep there, and on these points the rule was of the strictest, but the time that remained over to him after his daily exercises were done was his own, and he spent it with Aquila and Priscilla, to his immeasurable advantage. He was of a naturally religious temper, and for such a disposition there was little satisfaction to be found in those days. In all that concerned the spiritual world, things were at their darkest, as, indeed, they are wont to be before the coming of the light. It was impossible for any one of intelligence to respect the popular beliefs. They revolted even the moral sense; and a man was on the whole better without them. Eubulus had found some little good in a mystical brotherhood, which he had joined at Sicyon, where his father had kept up some old friendships. The institution was not of much account, but still it was better than nothing. In theory it kept alive

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the knowledge of two truths of the greatest importance, that there was one All-wise and Almighty God, and that man was immortal; in practice it was sadly degenerate. The truths were embodied in sentences formally pronounced, to which few paid any attention. Practically the meetings meant little beyond a spectacle and a feast. All that his membership did for Eubulus was that it gave him hints in which the companionship of his friends developed new meanings.

It was, of course, only by degrees that topics so serious were reached. The young Corinthian was keenly interested in what was, for the present, the work of his life, but he had a suspicion that Aquila personally did not regard it with very much favour. He was not a little pleased therefore when the Jew told him what he had heard from his Ephesian friend.

“I don’t suppose,” Aquila went on, after explaining what had made him change his way of thinking, “that I should ever be a spectator of the Games either here at the Isthmus or anywhere else. I have not been brought up to interest myself in such matters. But I have learnt to think of them with more tolerance; I cannot condemn what one of the greatest of the servants of God is content to use as an illustration.”

Jew and Greek

“Pardon me, sir,” said Eubulus, “but are there any games, any amusements practised among your people?”

Aquila was a little perplexed by the question.

“Well,” he said after a pause, “I hardly know how to answer you. The children, of course, have their toys and sports; and where there are boys they are sure to run races and wrestle. But for regular sports for grown-up men I can hardly speak. You see I have never lived in my own country, and there are difficulties, as you will easily understand, when our home is among strangers. We have always had, of course, practice at archery and throwing the javelin at a mark and using the sling. We pride ourselves on being as skilful with the sling as the most famous experts in that weapon, the Cretans for example. But these are more martial exercises than sports, and now that we are a province of the empire, and war is practically out of the question, such exercises have fallen into disuse. No, I should say that as a nation we never had any games to speak of.”

“And don’t you think, sir,” Eubulus went on, “that this is a loss.”

“Very likely,” replied Aquila, “but then you will remember that in the days when we were free, every man was virtually a soldier, and between

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keeping himself ready for service and working for his daily bread, he had no time to spare."

Priscilla, who had been listening to the conversation, now took a part in it.

"I cannot help thinking that our young friend is right. And I am quite sure that in one thing he and his people are greatly superior to my own. Their Games are infinitely superior to our dreadful Shows, poor creatures torn to pieces by wild beasts, a dreadful fate even for the worst criminals, and, what is still worse, men set to fight with men, aye, and slaughtered in cold blood afterwards if they do not acquit themselves so as to satisfy the spectators. I never shall forget what I saw when I went one day with my Aunt Cornelia to a great show. It was the first that the Emperor exhibited after he came to the throne, and it was expected to be particularly splendid. And so it was, as I was told by those who were experienced in such matters, but I thought it a very dreadful affair, and was very sorry that I was ever persuaded to go. The first part of it wasn't so bad; there were performing elephants and dancing bears and dogs that performed such tricks as you never saw. Then there were all sorts of strange and beautiful animals from all parts of the world, ostriches, and flamingoes—bright scarlet creatures

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—and deer of all kinds, big and little. I could not help feeling a little sorry for the beautiful creatures, taken away from their own places, and pretty certain to die. But this was nothing to what came afterwards. I can't attempt to describe the horrors of that day ; as a matter of fact I saw very little of them, for I hid my face in my hands, but what I did see was too dreadful—I can see it as I sit here at this moment. My aunt said, 'Come, Prisca'—they did not call me Priscilla then, for I had not grown as tall as I am now—'here is something well worth seeing, and nothing, too, that need shock you.' Well, I looked up, and it was an exciting thing, I must own, to watch. Do you know that I am ashamed to remember how exciting it was ? perhaps it was the wolf's blood in my veins. There were two men fighting. One had a net in one hand and a sort of three-pronged fork, rather bigger than a common shovel, in the other. He had a dagger, too, though I did not see it at the time. The other had a long sword, a very much more powerful weapon than the fork or the dagger ; but then the net was supposed to make the two equal. Well, it was very interesting to see them making feints, advancing or retreating, first one seeming to get the advantage and then the other. At last the man with the net made a throw—

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you see, if he entangled the other in it he had got the better of the fight—but he missed; the other man was watching him, watching not the hand but the eye, and guessed when he would throw, and so contrived to keep clear. Then the net-man took to his heels with his antagonist after him. He could not run quite so fast; his net and fork hindered him, and the other was soon close behind. And then a strange thing happened; the swordsman looked away for a moment; they told me afterwards that it was to the place where the girl to whom he was betrothed was sitting. In a moment the net-man saw it, made another cast, and entangled the swordsman in it. The next instant he struck him with the fork. That was bad enough to see, but it was nothing to what came after. The swordsman was supposed to have disgraced himself, though I don't wonder at his doing it; anyhow, the spectators were very much enraged—some of them I was told had lost money in betting on the affair—and they positively ordered the man to be killed. Yes, and my aunt was one of them. She was holding her thumb out straight, in a striking attitude, you might say, and she looked as fierce as if she could have killed the man with her own hands. 'Clumsy fool,' I heard her say, 'when he had the game in his

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own hands, to throw it away in this silly fashion. Let him suffer for it.' There was a horrid fascination in the thing, and I positively could not look away. And besides, I hoped that the poor fellow might escape after all. For all the people were not of the same mind. Some held their thumbs down—that means mercy. But it went against him. They told me afterward, that when there is a difference it almost always does ; except the party that is for killing is very small indeed. The Emperor, if he is present, or if not, the elder consul, decides, and he knows that the death sentence is more liked. It is the only thing that remains to the Romans of their old power. They used to rule the world, and now they have to be content with saying whether some poor wretch of a gladiator shall live or die. I shall never forget the gasp of satisfaction which my aunt gave when the net-man struck his dagger into his antagonist's side ; there was a dead silence, and you could hear the blow. So, at least, I fancied. I never went again, as you may suppose ; and I could hardly bear to speak to my aunt, though I don't suppose, poor woman ! that she was worse than others."

Eubulus, who was perfectly candid and honest when he was questioned about his life at the trainer's, could not give a very good account of

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the life that he had to lead there, or of his companions.

“The thing is not what it was, if I am to believe what was written about it in the former days. All the boys and lads are professionals, or would like to be professionals. If they win a victory, then they have their chance. One victory is not enough ; they must have a second, and then the people who pay their expenses are willing to go on. If they fail, they have to take up with some other occupation. But there is not a single competitor who comes for the love of the thing. In the old days, as I have read, the sons of the best families in Greece used to compete. Commonly they were content if they won a prize ; they went back to their houses and lived the life that they would have lived in any case, as statesmen, soldiers, teachers or anything else. Now and then if a man had special aptitude he would compete again and again. But he wasn't a professional. These things adorned his life, but they did not make it. So I have read. There was a Dorieus of Rhodes, whom I have read about in *Xenophon*. He won the Pancratium¹ three times at Olympia, and eight

¹ The Pancratium was a combination of boxing and wrestling. It was a very severe exercise indeed, and one which required a man to be in the very fullest vigour of life. The remarkable

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times here at Corinth. That was a wonderful thing to do when one thinks what the Pancratiun is. There is a man of eight and twenty training for it with us, and the master thinks that he is a little too old. But Dorieus, I have read, was always the first man in his state notwithstanding. I don't wonder that the Athenians when they took him prisoner let him go free. He must have been a wonder of a man. There is nobody of that sort among us. Of course I have no right to talk about birth and station. Still I wouldn't be a professional on any account, and I must say that I like the whole business far less than I did six weeks ago."

thing about Dorieus was that if he was three and twenty when he won his first victory at Corinth he must have been close upon forty when he won his last. And this was an age at which it was the rarest thing for a man to keep up the requisite strength and condition. In this country a prize-fighter was thought to be past his prime at thirty.

CHAPTER XVIII

Cleonicé.

IT is not to be supposed that Eubulus should have grown to manhood without having had his heart touched by the charms of some Corinthian maiden. As a matter of fact, he was deeply in love, and unfortunately the girl whom he loved was considerably above himself in social standing, for she was the only child of the Archon himself. There was also another difficulty in the way, were the social difficulty to be overcome. Her father's sister was priestess of one of the most famous shrines of the city, the temple of Athené of the Bridle, a local title which was given to the goddess because she was believed, according to the local legend, to have bridled the winged horse, Pegasus, and handed him over ready for use, to her favourite hero Bellerophon. Cleonicé then, for this was the maiden's name, was the priestess's nearest kinswoman, and her aunt was extremely anxious that she should succeed her in the priesthood, an office which was as lucrative as it was honour-

Cleonicé

able. Failing her it would pass to a distant branch of the Bacchiad house. Cleonicé's family was divided in the matter. Her father favoured the scheme. The dignity of the position held for generations by the family to which he belonged, appealed to him strongly. Her mother was adverse. The priestess of Athené, the maiden goddess, was necessarily restrained from marriage, and the mother, whose own union had been singularly happy, was unwilling to shut out her child from wedded happiness. Cleonicé herself did not as yet feel strongly either way. On the whole perhaps she was favourable to her aunt's scheme ; but it was probable that a little access of feeling might make her change her mind. At present she was perfectly heart-whole. She had seen Eubulus at a festival when the choirs of three temples had met, had even noticed his handsome person, and admired the penetrating sweetness of his tenor voice, but he had by this time entirely passed from her memory. He, on the contrary, had kept the image of the beautiful girl whom he had at once singled out from her companions in the shrine of his heart, and had continued to worship it secretly. The prospect was about as hopeless as it well could be, but he believed with the happy optimism of youth, that all things were possible in love,

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and he was content, at least for the present, to possess his soul in patience.

It may easily be imagined that the young man's secret did not long remain his own. Priscilla, who may be said to have made a love match for herself, and had found it a more than usually happy experience, was keenly interested in affairs of the kind, all the more keenly, perhaps, because she had no children to occupy her thoughts. It had struck her for some time that the young man was a little more absent-minded than one quite heart-whole might be expected to be. She found him more than once intently studying a little volume which, although she had no opportunity of inspecting it, she suspected might be, and which indeed was, a collection of love poems. He was a well educated lad, but not specially fond of reading. She had more positive proof when she picked up a fragment of parchment which he had covered with some attempts, not very felicitous, it must be owned, at love verses of his own. These strong suspicions were turned into certainty by a chance meeting between the two. It came about one evening on what was the fashionable promenade of Corinth, the road that led from the city to the Isthmian Race-course. Priscilla and Eubulus were on foot; Cleonicé and her mother were in their chariot, and they

Cleonicé

stopped to speak to the Roman lady. She was well known to be wealthy and high-born, and though she kept as much aloof from Corinthian society as courtesy permitted, she had some acquaintances in it. Eubulus naturally passed on when the carriage stopped, but not till he had betrayed himself to the keen eyes of his companion. There was no mistaking the significance of the fiery flush that mounted to his face, nor the eager look which he cast on the girl as she sat by her mother's side.

When Priscilla came to review the situation she felt not a little perplexed. She knew the secret of Eubulus' birth, or rather, she was aware of the fact that there was such a secret, for Aquila had naturally made her acquainted with it. Her interest in the young man was so direct and so strong that it was but right that she should know it. "Was the time come," she thought to herself, "when we ought to make ourselves acquainted with the secret? Perhaps the happiness of his whole life may depend upon it." This, however, did not commend itself to her more delicate judgment. It could scarcely be called a necessary cause. But it made both husband and wife see that the trust which they had undertaken might suggest very embarrassing questions.

Cleonicé

Chance, however, gave Eubulus an opportunity of commending himself to the young lady far more favourable than he could have contrived for himself or his friends could have contrived for him. It was customary to hold an aquatic festival, something like what we call a regatta. There were rowing and sailing competitions, and various sports that were practised on water. The affair was a very popular one, as might be expected in "Corinth of the Two Seas," a city which owed its wealth, and even, it may be said, its existence to the business of which these amusements were the less serious side. The festival was held in the Gulf, the waters of which were, as has been said, almost invariably calm. A vast crowd of vessels of all kinds covered the surface of the sea. The members of the Corinthian municipality attended in state on their barge, which was supposed to represent in shape and equipment the earliest of Greek ships, the world famous *Argo*.¹ The wealthy citizens had yachts and pinnaces of their own; for the sightseers generally, and these may be said to have included

¹ The legend was that Jason, having been treated with ingratitude and treachery by Pelias, King of Iolcos, for whom he had fetched the Golden Fleece from Colchis, migrated to Corinth and there dedicated the ship *Argo* to Poseidon.

Cleonice

nearly the whole population, everything that could float was requisitioned.

The festival was in full swing when one of the accidents which no foresight can wholly guard against occurred. The Isthmus on which Corinth stood was a generally level surface, interrupted, however, towards the southern side by a very remarkable rock, called the Acro Corinthus and serving as the citadel of the town. This rose almost abruptly from the plain to a height of nearly two thousand feet, and it occasionally caused a disturbance in the weather. A gust of east wind would sometimes be caught, so to speak, by the huge bulk of the rock, and come down with increased violence on the surface of the Gulf below.¹

This was what happened now. Hitherto there had been almost a dead calm, and the sailing vessels had set all their canvas to catch such fitful airs as from time to time ruffled the surface. Then there suddenly descended from the height an unexpected blast. It made for itself a way of some few yards wide, curiously distinguished from the surrounding calm by a dark and ruffled surface. Right in this line which it followed

¹ Like the great gust of wind also from the east, that came down on the Sea of Galilee from the heights of Gilead.



THE RESCUE OF CLEONICÉ.

Cleonicé

was a yacht with a great expanse of canvas. This it caught sidewise ; the rudder was wrenched by the sudden shock from the hand of the steersman—he was intent upon the fortunes of a race, and the vessel became unmanageable. The next moment she came into violent collision with a rowing boat. Happily the blow was delivered close to the bow, which was not occupied by any passengers ; even the man at the bow-oar escaped unhurt, but both rowers and passengers were precipitated into the water. The passengers were Cleonicé and her mother, for whom the municipal yacht was not available. The yacht, on the other hand, had been chartered by the trainer, who mindful of the wise maxim which forbids the bowman to keep his bow always bent, was giving his pupils a holiday. They were allowed a day off from regular training and exercises. To have permitted them to follow their own devices and spend the day as they chose would have been highly imprudent. A single excess might easily undo the good of weeks of discipline and temperance ; accordingly the trainer, who was well paid for his work and could afford to do things on a liberal scale, did not cease to shepherd his flock, and keep them under his own eye. Eubulus had thrown off his upper garment the moment he saw that a collision was imminent, and

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stood clad in a tight fitting tunic ready for a plunge. At an earlier period of the day he had caught sight of the row boat, and with a lover's keenness of vision, had distinguished its occupants. He now recognized them again, and in a moment he was in the water, making with the rapid and vigorous stroke of a practised swimmer for the girl, who was fortunately kept from immediately sinking by her garments. The actual rescue was easy enough. She had the presence of mind not to embarrass her deliverer by a struggle ; and he was so much at home in the water, that he had no difficulty in supporting her. Help too was speedily rendered by some of the boats in the neighbourhood. The incident happily ended without any disaster. The trainer's yacht escaped without capsizing, thanks to the fact that the breaking of the mast relieved it from the pressure of the sails. Cleonicé's mother had a narrow escape, but rather from the shock than from the actual danger of drowning. She was conscious enough, however, to ask the name of the rescuer, and she suffered nothing worse in the end than a few days' confinement to her bed. Certainly Eubulus had to thank his fortunes for a rare opportunity.

CHAPTER XIX

Plots.

THE reader will have no difficulty in understanding that the games of the Isthmus, in common with all similar celebrations in Greece, had entered on a period of decadence. So, indeed, had Greece itself. This condition of decay was no new thing. It had begun in the days when the country was yet free, it became more rapid and more complete when freedom was lost. It may be doubted whether things were worse in the Isthmus than elsewhere. But some of the accompanying evils were brought into greater relief by the near neighbourhood of a wealthy city. One great trouble was the change in the character of the competitions, or, perhaps, one should rather say, in the motives of the competitors. Time had been when honour was the predominant attraction; it had now been replaced by gain. Along with the decline there had been a change in the class of the competitors. It did not follow that a young man of aristocratic

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family was necessarily better than one who had come of a humbler stock ; but it was a fact that the lower class was more easily affected by mercenary motives. It is inconceivable that a youth belonging to the Alcmaeonidae of Athens, or to one of the royal houses of Sparta, or to the Bacchiads of Corinth should barter his chances of success for any earthly consideration. But men who sought victory because victory would put money into their pockets might be tempted to anticipate the object which they sought, if it was put within their reach without risk or delay.

Another result of the change was a vast increase in the betting, of which the various races were the subject. Things were very much as they are now. There was a multitude of people who speculated on these events in very various ways. Some did so simply to get a little excitement. They were ready to make wagers on races and on almost anything else. They had no particular knowledge of them or even interest in them. It was an opportunity of gambling ; the gambling was what they really cared about. Others had some kind of interest in them. They had been competitors themselves, had won prizes, or tried to win prizes, in former years, or they knew one or other of the candidates, or they affected a knowledge which they did not really possess.

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There was no great harm about these two classes. They risked money, it was true, which they could ill spare, and sometimes made wives and children go short of food and clothing ; their worst misdeed was to risk what did not in any way belong to them, the property, for instance, of employers. But the most mischievous class was that of the professional betters. Even of these some were honest up to their lights. They took advantage, it is true, of the ignorant and unwary, tempting them, for instance, to take as risks what were really certainties against them. Still they did not descend to downright fraud. If they lost a wager they did not attempt to escape payment ; and they did not seek to tamper with competitors or judges. But these men, honest or comparatively honest, were the exception. The great majority of the professional class had no scruples as to the methods by which they made their gain. They bribed or " hocussed " competitors ; they corrupted judges, they tampered with implementations ; they organized demonstrations which might terrify or perplex a candidate whose victory did not suit their operations. There was nothing, in short, in the way of fraud, and even of force, to which, if occasion served, they were not ready to have recourse.

To this highly objectionable class belonged

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the three men whom I am now about to bring under the notice of my readers. These fellows, Cleon, Democles, and Ariston by name, had been accomplices in sundry nefarious practices for some years. They had made, first and last, no small amount of money by their villainies, but their gains, as happens almost invariably with men of this stamp, seemed to have done them but very little good. They had been lightly come by and had gone lightly, and now they were about as "hard-up" as men could well be. It is needless to describe how they stood in regard to other contests in the forthcoming games; it will suffice to say that their prospects were neither particularly good nor particularly bad. They did not stand to lose or to win any great sum. With the long race the case was different. They had begun by giving long odds against Eubulus. This was reasonable enough. The young man when he had begun his training had not shown any special promise, and then there were the adverse family circumstances—they made it their business to make themselves acquainted with everything that was likely to tell upon the result—to be taken into account. He might have to be withdrawn from the competition, as we know he would have been withdrawn but for the quite unforeseen intervention of a

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friend. These and other reasons made them feel tolerably safe in laying heavy wagers against him. Then the situation changed. The young man developed wonderfully under the trainer's hands ; from being almost or wholly unknown, " a dark horse," to use the phraseology of the race-course, he became the first favourite. This, of course, was nothing less than a disaster to the confederates. There needs no great familiarity with the methods of betting to see that men who had been laying, say twenty to one, against him, would stand to lose considerably when the odds come to be two to one upon him. To secure themselves in the case of his winning they would have to risk a sum which they would be absolutely unable to pay ; while in the event of his being beaten they would be losing a considerable sum. To making a default in payment they had no objection in conscience, but they had the objection that it would put an end to their career, as far at least as Corinth was concerned.¹

¹ For the benefit of readers to whom these things seem obscure, I may explain the situation. The confederates had wagered twenty talents (say £4,218) to one talent (say £211) against Eubulus winning the long race : i.e. if he won they would have to pay £4,218 ; if he lost they would receive £211. To secure themselves against loss in the event of his winning, which they now perceived to be probable, they would have to wager £8,436 against £4,218. The result would be that if he

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The three rogues were busy discussing the situation in a tavern near the harbour of Lechaëum, a favourite haunt of these men because it was much frequented by sailors, anxious, as has been the way of the sailor from the days of the first ship, to get rid of their money.

“Well, Cleon,” said Ariston, “have you had any success with the young man?”

“None at all,” answered Cleon. “But I never thought that I should. He is not of that sort.”

“Would it be of any good, think you, to raise the price? I have heard wise men say that there is nothing that you cannot persuade a man to do if you only offer him enough.”

“Your wise man, I take it, did not know what he was talking about. Anyhow money won’t buy him. He may have his price, but it is something, you may depend upon it, that we can’t pay him. Now if we could promise him the fair Cleonicé,” the rascal had made it his business to find out all that he could about the young man, “it might be to the point; but I don’t see how that is to be done. No: he is

won, they would receive on the second wager the same sum that they would have to pay on the first. If he was beaten, which of course was quite possible, for accidents might happen, they would have to pay £8,436 and receive £211.

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not to be bought. We must think of some other way of setting to work."

"How about the trainer?" asked Ariston after a pause. "He is not so incorruptible, I suppose. At least I never knew one of the craft that was."

"Well," replied Cleon, "I don't see much of a chance in that direction either. You see, Eurylochus"—this was the trainer's name—"has a very good business, and he has got it together by keeping a good name. Whether he is honest by choice is more than I can say; but he is certainly honest by necessity. It would not be worth his while to do anything shady, or that was in the least suspicious. No: he would certainly want as much as he would ask if he were to sell his business, not to say anything at all of the bother and risk. If he were willing, and I am not at all sure of that, he would want more than we could manage. No: as far as I can see there is nothing to be got out of Eurylochus."

The third conspirator, Democles, who had hitherto been listening in silence, now broke in:—

"I have another idea which might be worth trying. Could we find some one else in the training school to help us? There are some thirty fellows there, and some of them must

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have begun by this time to find out that they haven't much of a chance of getting a prize—that they have, in fact, been spending time and money to no purpose. Might not one of them be glad to get something back, and be not very particular about the way of doing it? The particular way of doing it will be matter for consideration later on. Eubulus might be hounded—I know a fellow who is very clever in this kind of thing—or some accident might be contrived; or there is the old way of the dagger, not a bad way either, for dead men can tell no tales and ask no questions. How does this strike you, Cleon?”

“I think there is something in it,” answered the man appealed to. “It would be very strange if all Eurylochos’ thirty pupils were men of such incorruptible virtue as our friend Eubulus seems to be.”

The thirty were discussed one by one. The three rogues showed between them an amazing knowledge of the circumstances of every one of them. The choice was soon narrowed down to a few. No decent man with anything like a future before him could be induced to meddle with such a business, and it would be only dangerous to approach them. It was not long before a final selection was made. A certain

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Dromeus¹ was fixed upon as the most likely to serve the conspirators' purpose. He was a degenerate descendant of a famous race of athletes. The founder of that race had distinguished himself several centuries before by winning a quite unprecedented number of victories in the long race. He had been proclaimed victor twice at Olympia, as often at the Pythian Games, thrice at the Isthmian and five times at the Nemean. It is quite possible that the revolution that he made in the athletic diet—he changed its staple from cheese to flesh—may have had something to do with these unusual successes, but he must have had a great personal aptitude. Athletic distinction of this kind became hereditary in his family; the name, the significance of which was regarded as a matter of no small importance, was handed down from father to son. If there happened to be a break in the succession, it was taken up by the nearest relative.

But in course of time the family had lost, as families are apt to lose, some of its characteristics. Their physique was not impaired, but the moral qualities, which were of no less importance, had declined. Its present repre-

¹ Dromeus means "the runner."

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sentative was distinctly degenerate. He had indeed made a brilliant beginning of his career, for he had won the boys' foot race at Olympia; unfortunately the success had not done him any good. It had made him conceited, and it had rendered him the object of many flattering attentions, which he was not wise enough to estimate at their proper value. It was followed by two defeats at lesser festivals, and there was now every probability that a third failure would follow. Dromeus had begun to lose heart. He had failed to hold his own in private trials with Eubulus, and as time went on his inferiority became more and more marked. The usual result followed. As the man's hopes diminished his resolution and perseverance slackened. Opportunities of indulgence—and the most jealously guarded system of training could not wholly exclude them—were not avoided, and were soon even sought. So it came to pass that Dromeus' prospects were anything but bright. His means were narrow, he had put himself under very embarrassing obligations, and he had lost his self-respect. He was, in short, exactly in the condition in which he would be most likely to yield to a temptation addressed either to his pride or to his needs.

Cleon proceeded to make his advances with

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all the skill which a long apprenticeship in villainy had taught him. A direct suggestion of violence or fraud would, he felt, be impolitic. Dromeus was not ripe for it—the evil had only begun to work in him. Jealousy of the young rival, who now stood so high in popular favour, seemed the motive to which an appeal might be most easily made. Cleon had already a slight acquaintance with the young man, and he found opportunities of improving it. A little conversation gave him no little insight into Dromeus' character and capacities. It was evident that he was at once extraordinarily vain and extraordinarily ignorant. The subject of the coming race, and with it, of course, the popularity of Eubulus, soon turned up. Dromeus was almost frantically jealous of his competitor. Both his family and his personal pride were touched.

“Who,” he cried, “is this young upstart? Where are his traditions? His father is an artisan, or a trader, or something equally insignificant. And his grandfather? No one probably knows. And these fools in Corinth here crowd to see him, aye, and positively cheer him. I heard them doing it this very morning. Do they know that I am the sixteenth in descent from the great runner Dromeus of Stymphalus?” If any one in Corinth did not know it, it was not

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by any fault of Dromeus, who was seldom in any company for five minutes without mentioning the name of his great ancestor. "It is monstrous that this low-born fellow should thrust himself forward in this fashion, and intrude himself into the amusements of gentlemen."

"Is he really worth anything?" asked Cleon.

Cleon could have answered his own question as well as any one in Corinth, but he wanted to sound his companion's thoughts.

"Well," answered Dromeus, "he is not bad for a fellow of that class. He has a fair speed and seems to last sufficiently well. But it is the race itself that tests a man. Trials are very different things; but to run with the eyes of fifty thousand people fixed upon you, that proves what is in a man. It is then that the hereditary temper shows itself. Do you know, that when I ran at Olympia I did not feel the faintest suspicion of a tremor?"

"Is it all quite straightforward, think you?" said Cleon.

"Straightforward," replied Dromeus. "I don't quite catch your meaning. I never saw the fellow cheat, I don't think that he would, for he is not a bad sort; even if he could, I must own that I do not see where his opportunity would come in."

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“Have you ever heard of charms?” asked Cleon.

“Charms? What do you mean?” cried Dromeus.

“Well, I mean the magic lotions and potions by which witches and wizards do such wonderful things.”

“I have heard of such things,” said the runner; “but tell me more.”

“Well,” said Cleon, “there are stories without end of what Medea did in this very city. She put some dreadful drug on the robe which she gave to the King’s daughter. Jason, her husband, had divorced her and was going to marry the princess—and it burnt her as if it had been fire, aye, and her old father the King too. This, of course, was a mischievous drug; but there are things which give strength as well as take it away. Go to any drug-seller in the city, and he will tell you of such things, aye, and sell them to you, if you are ready to pay the price. I don’t mean to say but what most of these things are mere rubbish; still there is no smoke without fire. The pretence would not be sought after if there was not some reality behind them.”

Dromeus was intensely interested in all this. It appealed at once to his jealousy and to his pride. It had been hateful to him to see a low-

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born rival gaining the advantage over him, and it consoled him vastly to believe that the advantage had been secured by foul means.

Cleon thought it best to interrupt the conversation at this point, and to leave his suggestion to work.

CHAPTER XX

A Drug.

CLEON's suggestion, so artfully adapted to the motives which were dominant in the disappointed athlete's breast, worked as leaven works in a measure of meal. The two met, according to arrangement, on the fourth day, the appointed place being the fountain of Peirené. Before, however, this meeting took place, there had been a consultation between the conspirators, and Cleon's plan was discussed.

"Is this all an imagination of yours, Cleon?" asked Ariston. "Is there any drug that makes a man especially fleet of foot and long of wind? and is there any other drug with which you can counteract the effects of the first?"

Cleon smiled. "You are really very encouraging, Ariston. If you believe half this rigmarole, there must be many more people in Corinth than I thought who believe it all. As for the first drug we need not inquire. There may be such, or there may not. As for the second, I have no doubt whatever. I know of several

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drugs, though these things are not in my especial line, which if a man take he will never run quickly again, or indeed slowly, for the matter of that."

The two other confederates started. Cleon had been thinking of the plan for some time, and his mind had become habituated to it. To his companions it came as a surprise and a blow.

"What," said Ariston, in a faltering voice, "you mean to poison the man."

"Good words! good words! my friend," cried Cleon in mocking tones. "Who talked of poison? We administer a drug, compounded according to a well-known prescription. No, I am wrong. It is not we who administer it; it is Dromeus. Suppose that something happens. Untoward accidents do happen when we have to do with these powerful agents. It is quite possible that nothing may be found out. Of ten deaths by poisoning—no, let me say after the administration of drugs—seven or eight cause no suspicion. And when there are suspicions it is very difficult to prove anything. But let us imagine the worst; I do hope that no harm will come to our very amiable and promising friend Eubulus, but if it should, if he should be laid aside, and people are so unkindly curious as to ask who did it, what would the answer be? Here is a

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young man in the same house, who has any number of opportunities of administering the drug, and the strongest reason for wishing the young fellow out of the way—a rival likely to be an unsuccessful rival. Who would think of looking any further? And what should we do? I should suggest that we should say something to this effect—‘This is a very deplorable affair; we cannot think of making a profit out of it; we cancel all the wagers which we laid against our poor friend. We lament his loss as much as any one, and this is our way of showing it—a very poor way, but all that we can do.’ It is true that we should lose some twenty minas¹ apiece, but then, think what an advertisement! And, after all, we shall be out of the hole pretty cheaply.”

This was convincing, and Cleon went to the meeting fully prepared with what had to be said. Dromeus went, as may be supposed, straight to the point.

“Well,” he said, “have you anything further to tell me about the drug?”

“Yes,” replied Cleon, “it is a well-known article in the trade. They say that it is made out of some herb which the stags eat to give themselves speed, ‘deers’ garlic’ they call it.”²

¹ About £80.

² *Elaphoscorodon*, mentioned by Dioscorides.

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That may or may not be true. The medicine-sellers have a way of inventing these particulars. But I believe that it is really a very effective thing, probably because it works on the heart and lungs. However, we need not trouble ourselves about this ; the really important thing is the counter-acting drug. And here we have a choice of three or four."

"I should not like to hurt the poor fellow," said Dromeus, who, when he was not mastered by his special faults, was not ill-natured. "He has no business here, but I should be very sorry to do him a real injury."

"Of course not," replied Cleon. "I should hate doing any such thing quite as much as you. We understand each other then. I find the medicine, and you will take an opportunity of administering it. I would impress upon you not to lose any time, and to be very careful about observing the directions that may come with the medicine. Of course you will contrive that no one should know."

"You are sure," cried Dromeus, who began to feel somewhat uneasy, "you are sure that it would not do any real harm ?"

"Of course not," answered Cleon. "What do you take me for ? Do I look like a poisoner ?"

He certainly looked like a villain, whether he

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had the peculiar poisoner characteristic or no, and Dromeus could not help thinking so. However, he was too deeply committed to draw back. "And after all," he argued with himself—arguments which one half of the conscience uses to the other half seldom fail to persuade—"a man cannot help his looks." After a pause of reflection he went on: "Then I rely upon you. And when shall you have it ready?"

"I shall have it to-day," answered Cleon. "Be here again at sunset, and I will hand it to you then. If by any chance I should fail to get it, then come this time to-morrow."

By the time appointed for the meeting Dromeus had contrived to swallow his scruples. He received the drug with instructions how to use it. It was in a liquid form, and was in a very small compass, and so could be easily dropped into a cup of water. It will suffice to say that the opportunity was found and duly used.

CHAPTER XXI

An Antidote.

AMONG Cleonicé's neighbours was one to whom she was greatly attached. The tie between them was of a particularly tender kind, for Tecmessa—this was the neighbour's name—was her foster sister, her elder by some three months. They had played together as children. Later on, Tecmessa had been with her as companion-maid, treated with a familiar kindness which never seemed to recognize any distinction of degree, but returning all the affection showed her with a delicate sense that the distinction was there after all. Ladies in the position of Cleonicé often treat inferiors as if they were equals, and are perfectly sincere in so doing, while yet they unconsciously expect an answering demeanour that an equal would not assume. Tecmessa had borne herself in this somewhat difficult position with the greatest tact and discretion, and the relation between the two had not been troubled by even a hint of disturbance or

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misunderstanding. About a year and a half before the time my narrative has now reached, Tecmessa had married. Her husband was a prosperous, and, if public opinion could be trusted, a well-conducted young trader. He dealt in a variety of articles, the principal of which were wines, spices and drugs, and was able to give his wife a well-furnished and comfortable home. There was not a better kept household of the class in all Corinth than that of Alexander and Tecmessa. They had one child, a boy of some five months old.

The baby was one morning seized with some mysterious ailment, which entirely perplexed both the father, who had some medical knowledge of a sort, and the local physician, a slave whom his owner permitted to practise on condition of receiving a certain part of his gains. Modern medicine would no doubt have given the illness a name, for the science has advanced prodigiously in classifying, though not perhaps so much in curing. The first thought then was to find a cause in the action of some deity. The child had been smitten, they said, with one of the shafts of Apollo.¹ Then came the question, how had the parents provoked the wrath

¹ Apollo was supposed to be the inflicter of sudden death in the case of males, Artemis in the case of females.

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of the deity? And here the father was visited with a recollection that struck him with dismay and remorse.

“Oh, Tecmessa,” he cried, “I fear me much that I am in fault. Even before this dreadful thing happened I was anything but easy in my mind. Yesterday about an hour after noon a customer came in, who asked for a particular kind of medicine. I have to keep it, but I must own that I don’t like selling it. It is an excellent medicine, but then a man may easily do himself a great mischief, if he does not know what he is using, or may do a great mischief to some one else if he does know. Still one can hardly refuse a customer. It is like saying to a man, ‘You are either a fool or a poisoner.’ Well, I sold some of it yesterday. I thought that I had seen the man’s face before, but could not fix it, and then it passed out of mind altogether. This morning I heard that Eubulus, the great runner, whom everybody is talking about in Corinth, had been suddenly taken ill. And then it burst upon me all of a sudden that the purchaser was one Cleon, a betting man of no good reputation. Good Heavens! What is to be done?”

“Perhaps,” said Tecmessa, “the lady Cleonicé will think of something. She is a wonderfully

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clever lady. And here, by good luck, she is coming."

So it was. Cleonicé seldom let a couple of days go by without paying a visit to her humble friend ; so it was nothing strange that she should make her appearance just in the nick of time. She quite deserved Tecmessa's praise ; she was wonderfully clever ; and her native wit at once suggested some simple means for giving the little sufferer at least some temporary ease. While this remedy was being applied, she heard the husband's story, and here again she was equal to the occasion.

"You found the poison," she exclaimed, "can't you find the antidote ?"

"Dear me," cried the husband, striking his hands together, "what an idiot I have been not to think of it ! But that baby screaming and writhing about fairly drove everything out of my head. Antidote ! of course I can find an antidote."

"Then don't lose a moment in doing it. Go and make it up at once and follow me to Aquila's tent-factory. You know the place ? But stay, how long will you be about the antidote ?"

"I believe that I have some ready made up," answered the man.

"In that case," said Cleonicé, "it will save time if you will come with me."

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The chariot in which the girl had come was standing at the door ; and the chemist, who had found a dose of the antidote ready, as he had hoped, mounted, not a little abashed at finding himself in so fashionable a vehicle. The party was fortunate enough to find Priscilla at home, and reinforced by her, a naturally capable person, with a large experience gathered in years of charitable ministration to others, went on at once to the trainer's house. Here confusion reigned supreme. The trainer himself was in despair. Such a thing had never before come within the range of his experience. The young man, such was the upshot of the narrative which his visitors somehow contrived to extract from him, had shown all his usual vigour at the exercises, and was just rising from the evening meal, when he fell back speechless and senseless. The physician attached to the school had been hastily summoned, and had not hesitated, on a review of the symptoms, to pronounce that his patient had been poisoned. Before his arrival, however, a rough and ready remedy had been applied which had possibly saved the young man's life. One of the pupils had a faint recollection of seeing a similar case healed by the application of a strong current of cold water to the back of the neck. This was done, and pulsation, which appeared to be

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suspended, was revived.¹ The physician had nothing to suggest except the administration of a cordial. This had been attempted, but with little success. The patient's teeth were firmly clenched, and it was almost impossible to make him swallow. This physical difficulty was the first that had to be overcome. How Priscilla overcame it is beyond the present chronicler's power to describe. She had had a large experience in a class of disease much more frequent in Southern Europe than in our own land, a class of which the generic name is tetanus or lockjaw, and of which this is the most painful and perplexing symptom. After a long course of patient effort she accomplished her end; the antidote was administered and its powerfully stimulant qualities made it speedily effective. During some part of the time Cleonicé had been present rendering such help as she could. As the crisis approached, Priscilla, almost fearing that an experience so full of excitement might throw another patient on her hands, compelled her to retire. When appearances began to indicate the favourable result of which at one time every one had despaired, she could not resist the temptation

¹ Probably the young man had been dosed with some preparation of the strychnine kind.

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of calling her back. The situation was, as we know, profoundly interesting to her, and she could not decline the chance of seeing how it would develop itself. As a nurse, too, she could easily persuade herself that nothing could be better for the patient than that his eyes should first open on what she knew was the dearest sight that this world could show him.

The result was all that she could hope for. Cleonicé, whom Priscilla had not forgotten to put exactly where the young man's eyes would be likely first to fall, could not fail to see that the young man recognized her. The first gaze of his wide-open eyes was without meaning; then as consciousness returned, it became instinct with a fullness of joy and love which it was impossible to mistake. The girl turned away in surprise and confusion; one wonders whether she was wholly without some anticipation of what she saw, but we may be sure that an hour of eloquent speech could not have set forth the secret of his heart more plainly and forcibly than did that one glance of returning life.

The poison was not one of those that injure the tissues of the body or permanently impair its organs. Its danger lies in the power that it has to bring about a sudden suspension of animation. It is not unlike a case of drowning.

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Recover the drowned, or apparently drowned, person, before the heart and lungs have been inactive too long, and he has received no permanent injury. Eubulus, accordingly, was soon himself again ; a day or two sufficed for complete recovery from the shock. Of course his popularity in Corinth was enormously increased. The news of an adventure that had come so very near to being fatal increased the interest felt in him by his fellow citizens almost beyond precedent.

As for Dromeus, he was seen no more at the trainer's, or anywhere else in Corinth. It would not have been safe for him to show himself anywhere in the town, for he would infallibly have been lynched. His conduct when Eubulus was suddenly seized with illness had caused suspicion ; he was no hardened criminal, always able to hide his feelings. But he was forgotten in the general confusion, and he took the opportunity thus given him to escape. He had the wit to see that he was not likely to make a success of the traditional profession of his family, and applied himself to some mercantile pursuit, and but for an occasional hint that if it had not been for the malevolence of his enemies he would have been the first athlete in Greece, he passed the rest of his life with an eminently respectable character.

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As for the confederates, they had fought, it might be said, a drawn battle. They had accomplished nothing as far as the disabling of the athlete was concerned, and they felt that this avenue at least was closed against them. If they were to accomplish their object it must be done in some other way. On the other hand, they had escaped without suspicion. Dromeus had practically acknowledged his guilt by his precipitate flight. They were not absolutely discouraged, but they felt that they were driven into a corner ; the time was short and speedy action was necessary. We shall see in the next chapter what was the device to which they had recourse.

CHAPTER XXII

Fresh Plots

THE three confederates had in their pay one of the slaves belonging to the trainer's household. This fellow played the same part as do the touts on an English racecourse. He reported performances, gave the current gossip of the establishment—in short, kept his employers supplied with the latest information about what had happened or was expected to happen. Beyond this he did not go; he was not acquainted with their schemes, but simply told them what he heard or saw. From this man the three heard of Eubulus's sudden illness, of his speedy recovery, and of Dromeus's departure. The news was, of course, a disappointment. So much time had been lost, and they were no nearer their end. Still things might have been worse. It was an immense relief that Dromeus had disappeared. He might have turned against them; and his evidence, for which it would not have been difficult for him to find corroboration, would

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have been most damaging. That danger, anyhow, was over. Still the question remained, and the time for finding an answer was short. How were they to save themselves against the consequence of Eubulus's victory, an event now more likely than ever? They knew from their agent that the young man was none the worse for his illness, and they lost no time, as may be imagined, in meeting to review the situation.

Ariston was disposed to take credit to himself for having foretold or at least hinted at the failure of the enterprise.

"I have always held," he said, "that there is nothing like cold steel. Your poisons are very clever, I allow, if you can only get them to work without intermission. And I allow that it is a great advantage that very often you are not called to account for administering them. But then 'there's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip.' As we have just seen, there are antidotes to be reckoned with. And if you get home to a man's heart with a dagger, there is no antidote for that."

"It's all very well," said Cleon, whose annoyance at the failure of his scheme was not a little increased by such talk, "it is all very well to talk about the dagger, but who is going to use it? When and where will you find the opportunity?"

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This young fellow is just now the observed of all observers. Where do you propose to get at him? In the trainer's house? Why, it is guarded like a tyrant's palace. They were always careful; but now, after this last business, they are more careful than ever. In the streets? with scores of people always running after him? You might by the greatest good luck deal him a blow. But what then? Where is your chance of escape? Why, you would be infallibly torn to pieces. I must own that this sort of thing is not to my liking. Why, I would sooner pay up than face a howling mob of Corinthians when I had just stabbed their favourite runner."

"My dear Cleon," retorted Ariston, "you are really somewhat wanting in imagination. You don't suppose that I am going to behave like some silly boy, who when he has a quarrel with a companion has no other idea of making it straight than giving him a box on the ear. No, I know a better way than that, and I will tell you what it is. I propose that we forge a message from Eubulus's father—I don't know whether you are aware that he is now living at Mantinea—to this effect: that he is dying, and that he must see his son before his death, having some secret of immense importance to communicate to him. Well, he sets out—he is not

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the sort of fellow to neglect a message of that kind—and we waylay him.”

“That sounds easy enough,” said Cleon, “but how are we to waylay him? He is certain not to be alone, and we are likely to fail just as much as in the Dromeus business, and with much worse consequences to ourselves.”

“A want of imagination again,” said Ariston. “I didn’t mean, of course, that you and I and Democles were to waylay him. Have you ever heard of Pauson the robber chief? Well; I know how to get into touch with him, and my plan is that he and his band should do the waylaying. As to after developments, we must leave them for the present. I am still for putting the young fellow out of the way. Still, I am not bigoted to that idea. If it can be arranged—for a certainty, mark you, and no possible mistake—that he does not win the race, let him live. That, however, may be postponed for the present. What must be done at once is the getting hold of Pauson, for there is no time to lose. Now, my friends, what do you say to this? Have you got any better scheme of your own. If not, do you approve? If you do, I will start in the course of a few hours.”

Agree they did—in fact, there was scarcely a

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choice—and Ariston's scheme seemed to have some promise of success. Meanwhile two actors, whose earlier appearance in the drama I am representing, my readers will doubtless remember, had again come upon the stage. These were the Corsican captain of the ship *The Twin Brothers* and the bandit chief from the Gallinarian Wood. The wheat trade carried on by Manasseh and Company, if the phrase may be allowed, had not been interrupted by the banishment of the Jews from Rome; the business had been temporarily assigned to a Gentile partner. But the Corsican's employment had been interrupted by another cause. *The Twin Brothers*, which, under the charge of an incompetent pilot, had been damaged by being run upon one of the moles in the harbour of Ostia, had been laid up for repairs. The captain had arranged for the execution of this work, and acting on permanent instructions from his employers had charged some one whom he could trust with the business of seeing that they were properly executed. He was quite aware that this sort of thing did not fall within his own province, and he was also rejoiced to get quit of a tedious piece of business which would keep him hanging about the harbour just at the season of the year when it was even less agreeable than usual. The

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question then presented itself, where should his enforced holiday be spent? There were various reasons that suggested Corinth. The chief, for whom he had a genuine respect, was there, and he might be of service to him and his son, and then there was the forthcoming spectacle of the Isthmian Games. There were also permanently interesting features in the place. The city was one of the great centres of the carrying trade of the world, and the Corsican was sure that he might pick up some knowledge about professional details which would be of service to him in his work. He was about to set out, and purposed to make his journey by sea, when he bethought him of the bandit chief. The man was probably by this time ready, or nearly ready, to get about again. What was he to do? or what was to be done with him? The Corsican felt himself in a way responsible for him, and he came, without much hesitation, to the conclusion to take him with him to Corinth. Accordingly he altered his route, made his way to the place where the man had been left to recover from his injuries, and finding him fairly well restored, brought him to Corinth in his company.

The two had been in the town a day or so, and happened to be standing near the southern

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gate of the city when a traveller who had the appearance of being equipped for a journey, for his horse carried heavy saddle-bags, passed out by the gate. The time was near sunset, and as the road happened not to bear a very good reputation, the proceeding struck the two as somewhat strange. The Corsican, whose hearty manners put him on friendly terms with everybody, spoke to the porter in charge of the gate.

"I do not know what you think, but this is hardly the time that I should choose for starting on a journey, especially if I had to travel by this road, which, they tell me, is not as safe as it might be."

"It is a little odd," replied the porter, "but I suppose that he knows what he is about."

"Do you know him?" asked the Corsican.

"Oh, yes, I know him," said the porter, with a smile. "He is no greenhorn, as you might think. He knows the point of a sword from the hilt, if any man in Corinth does."

"Who is he?"

"Well, his name is Ariston; he is a betting man, and as sharp as they make them; much more in the way, I should say, of lightening other people's purses than of letting other people lighten his. But it is not my business to give him advice. If it had been a young fellow now,

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one who did not know his way about, I might have made so bold as to say a word ; but Ariston is not one of that sort : he must go his own way."

Rufus, the ex-bandit—he had definitely retired from the profession—pulled his companion's cloak, and whispered that they should move out of earshot.

"I could not quite catch what the fellow said ; he talked such queer Greek." Rufus, it may be explained, was bilingual, as were many of the Italians of the south,¹ but his Greek was naturally something of a patois, while the porter's speech was fairly pure, of course with the broad vowels of the Corinthian dialect, but still good enough. "You were talking about the traveller—was it not so ?"

The Corsican explained to his companion what had been said. Rufus mused awhile.

"Maybe," he said, "he wants to meet these gentlemen of the road. You see I know something of the ins and outs of the business. I have had to do in my time with some very respectable persons indeed, and what used to happen when they had something particular to tell us,

¹ The southern part of the peninsula, my readers will remember, had been known by the name of Magna Graecia. Polybius (203-121 B.C.) is the first writer to employ the name, of course in its Greek equivalent, but it had been in use long before.



ARISTON RIDING OUT OF CORINTH.

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was that they were taken prisoners. It seemed straightforward to other people."

"Well, my good Rufus," said the Corsican, "there could hardly be a better judge in such matters than you. It is quite clear that there is some plot hatching, but I don't know that it is any business of ours to meddle with it. But we will keep our ears and eyes open, and it is quite possible that we may understand what puzzles other people."

CHAPTER XXIII

Among the Hills

ARISTON had calculated his time with sufficient nicety. Riding at a smart pace for about an hour and a half, he came to a spot where he had calculated on finding some of the bandit troop on the watch for travellers. And there, accordingly, he found them. The men were allowed to deal as they thought best with wayfarers who did not seem to be of any particular importance or to promise any noteworthy gain. The poor they left absolutely unharmed. It was an axiom in their occupation to make friends with this class. In every age and all the world over the professional robber has claimed to be the champion of the poor. He does his best, he would say, to redress the inequalities of life, to make the rich a little less rich, if he does not accomplish very much to making the poor less poor. Practically they know that their days are numbered if for any reason the labouring class of the region where they are at work turn against them. Travellers of the middle class were allowed

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to pass on paying a toll which was nicely calculated to suit the apparent means, present or future, of the victim. A long experience had taught the members of the band who were detailed for outpost duty what they might reasonably and profitably ask from those who came in their way. Ariston seemed to be of the class who would pay a moderate toll. When he was informed of the amount which was expected of him, five shillings or so, he acknowledged that it was perfectly reasonable. "As a matter of fact, however," he went on, "I have come here on business, and profitable business too, I hope. Perhaps you will take me to Pauson—Pauson is still in command, I presume—for I am bound to put him in possession of the facts. Meanwhile, gentlemen, I am much obliged to you for your courtesy. I am not a rich man, but if the price of as good a flagon of wine as can be got in this country is of any use to you, it is at your service." And he pressed a silver coin into the hand of each of his two captors.

Pauson and his men were bivouacking in an open space in the wood which bordered the road on both sides. They were about to sit down to their evening meal, at which Ariston was asked to join them. A sign had passed between his captors or friends, as we may be pleased to call them,

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indicating that this hospitality might be properly extended to him. The meal finished, Ariston suggested a private interview with the chief, and on obtaining it, proceeded to propound his plan.

“I will be perfectly straightforward with you,” he went on, after explaining that he wanted to have Eubulus captured and carried off. “I am acting for some friends. It is essential for us that Eubulus should not win the race. For helping us to that result we are ready to pay you. That then is your first profit out of the business. Then the young man has friends in Corinth, friends who will be willing to pay ransom, but not, I take it, a very high ransom. They are not old friends, you will understand, and they are not, as far as we know, really rich. Still there will be a ransom, I do not doubt. You will easily reckon out what you may judiciously ask. Now comes in another consideration. I don’t conceal from you that, on the whole, we should prefer to have the young man put out of the way altogether. ‘Dead men tell no tales’; that, I take it, is a proverb that you fully appreciate. What I propose, then, is that when you have fixed the amount of ransom which you think of asking, you will give us the choice of paying it, and with it, of course, the

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liberty of dealing with the young man as we see fit." The chief looked at his visitor with an admiration that was half ironical.

"You gentlemen of the city," he said, after a pause, "are thorough-going. We simple folk out in the country here cannot pretend to come up to you. We don't like killing people. Of course it has to be done from time to time. If a man is foolish enough to resist when we want to take him—well, he leaves us no choice. Then again, if a man's friends don't care to ransom him—we always are strictly moderate in our charges—then again we have no choice. It must be established as a rule without an exception—no ransom, no release. Why, if we were to let men go without payment made, we should have half Corinth coming out to spend their holidays free of expense among the mountains. To think that we should keep an idle fellow for a month, eating and drinking of the best—we never stint our guests, and their appetites are tremendous after the first day or two—and that he should get off scot-free at the last, the idea is absolutely preposterous. But to take ransom for him, and then let him be killed before he gets home—that is not our way. It would be a serious injury to our character, for we have to think of that just like other people."

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“But it wouldn’t be your doing,” said Ariston, “it would be ours.”

“The world is very uncharitable,” replied Pauson, “and especially in its dealings with us, and we should have the thing laid at our door for a certainty. You see when we take ransom for a prisoner we give him what is virtually a safe conduct to his home. If we were to let him go and then take him again it would be pure villainy, and killing him or letting him be killed—for it comes to the same thing—when he is on his way back would be altogether unfair.”

“Well,” said Ariston, “if you won’t have it, you won’t, and we must make another plan. But you understand that the young man is not to get back to Corinth before the race. That is essential.”

“I understand,” answered Pauson. “And how do you propose to get him here?”

Ariston explained the plan of the forged message. “And here,” he went on, “you may be able to help us. We want a messenger. Can you find us one?”

“Well,” said the chief, “Corinth is not exactly the place my men would choose for spending a day’s holiday. It is too close and shut up, and sometimes very unhealthy. I have known men who were in the soundest health die there in a quite unaccountable way. No:

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we prefer the air of the hills. But stay ; I think that I can help you after all. We had a new recruit join us last night. He might do : they don't know his face, you see ; and they have a prejudice against those of us whom they do know. Where did you say the message was to come from ? ”

“ From Mantinea,” replied Ariston.

“ That suits exactly ; if I remember rightly the fellow comes from Mantinea, ran away, I take it, from his master, and made a little mistake about money.”

The recruit from Mantinea was accordingly sent for. It turned out that his case had been accurately divined by the brigand chief, who, of course, was familiar with the causes which swelled his numbers. He had forged his master's signature to a receipt, and had misappropriated the money. Signature, it should be explained, is used in the first meaning of the word, the affixing of sign or seal. Writing was a comparatively rare accomplishment in those days, and a document was “ signed ” when the person for whom it was drawn up put his sign or seal upon it.¹ The man had fled from Mantinea

¹ This is still often done, especially in the East, the practice being for the person “ signing ” to dip the seal into ink and make an impression on the parchment or paper.

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as soon as he found that his malpractices would be discovered. He had overheard talk about making a second application to the debtor from whom he had received payment, and he knew that inquiries must result in detection. Accordingly he made his escape from the town, and carried the seal, to which by Eumenes' carelessness—and Eumenes, as has been said, did not manage his affairs with prudence—he had had access. The whole business now became easy enough. It would have been difficult to successfully imitate a handwriting throughout a whole letter, but nothing of the kind was wanted. The usual communication in such a case would be this. A notary would take down from dictation or would prepare according to instructions a statement of what was to be said, and to this the sign of the person from whom it proceeded would be affixed. The miscellaneous gathering of which Pauson's band was composed contained a rascal who had served in a notary's office, and who could write the clerkly handwriting common to this class of *employés*. One notary's handwriting was scarcely distinguishable from that of another. What may be called a professional appearance was common to all documents so prepared. The fact that from beginning to end they were written in capitals made them

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appear, except, perhaps, to the eyes of an expert, absolutely alike. The ex-scribe lost no time in preparing a letter that purposed to be addressed by Eumenes to his son Eubulus. It ran thus :

“Eumenes to his son Eubulus with hearty greeting. I charge you by all that you have received at my hands and by all the love which I know you bear to me that you come hither without delay. I am stricken with a mortal disease, and I have that to say to you which greatly concerns the happiness of your mother and your brothers and sisters. I speak not of yourself, for I know it is your nature to think rather of others.”

To this document the seal was duly applied. So furnished, the messenger set forth.

CHAPTER XXIV

Before the Archon

THE plot had all the success which the combination of favourable circumstances seemed to promise for it. The bearer of the forged letter covered the distance that lay between his starting point and Corinth so quickly that he reached his destination before noon on the following day,¹ and he had no difficulty in finding the trainer's house, and in delivering the false missive to the person to whom it was addressed. It caused, as may easily be supposed, no small disturbance. The trainer was furious, all the more so as he felt he could not with a good grace, or even with any reasonable hope of success, object to the young man obeying the summons. After all a man is an apparently reasonable creature, and cannot be handled with the compulsion that is used with animals. A horse may be forced with whip and spur to make

¹ It will be remembered that all the distances in Greece are small. Athens was not more than 140 miles from Sparta on one side and from the northern boundary of Greece on the other.

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an extraordinary effort, but he cannot be made to run a whole race by the use of such stimulants. A man is even less amenable to force. Eubulus might be brought to the starting point, but unless he could be made to run with willingness and zeal, he might quite as well not have been brought thither. The trainer had the good sense to make no delay in yielding. If the thing had to be done, it would be better done at once. If the young man were to go at once, he might be back again in time to run the race. It was a lamentable contretemps ; still, it was not necessarily fatal. If the gods gave a speedy recovery or a speedy end to this most inopportune illness, all might yet go well. As for Eubulus, he did not doubt for a moment the genuineness of the message. The thought never indeed occurred to him. He did not recognize the bearer as having been in Eumenes' employment, but this was not likely. The workmen had been transferred with the building and apparatus to Aquila. On the other hand he knew the seal, impressions of which were sufficiently familiar, and the man was acquainted, as has been said, with a number of particulars connected with the family. He introduced in his talk various little details about this or that member of it in a way that would have dis-

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sipated any doubts, even if the young man had entertained them. The preparations for the journey were speedily made, for they were of the slightest. The young man carried with him a small stock of food, just as much as he could carry without hindrance to his speed. He hoped to reach Mantinea, which was little more than forty miles distant, before sunset, and he promised that he would return, unless absolutely prevented by circumstances, on the third day. The trainer had no alternative to accepting this conditional promise. He implored the young man not to fail him : to lose what he said was as near a certainty as anything in human life could possibly be, would, he said, be the height of folly. He repeated his entreaties and commands with pathetic insistence up to the very moment of Eubulus's departure. When the young man was out of sight he burst into tears of mixed vexation and anger—tears were a relief to the feelings in which the impetuous Greek was very ready to indulge. Recovering from his outburst, he bethought him of something which might possibly help to bring about an accomplishment of his wishes. Though not by any means used to exercises of piety he determined to offer a sacrifice to Hermes, an appropriate deity, as being at once the patron god of the race-

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course and of athletics generally, and also the giver of good luck. This done, he sat down to wait, with as much patience as he could muster, the issue of the affair. It may be easily supposed that his household, whether competitors in training or slaves, did not have for the next few days an easy time. The messenger, though he received from Pauson the strictest commandment to return at once, could not resist the temptation of stopping a day or two in Corinth. He was a dissipated young fellow, and he had two or three gold pieces in his pocket; to such a man so circumstanced the city offered irresistible attractions. In any case his revels would not have lasted very long, for Corinth was notorious among the cities of Greece for the speed with which she emptied the pockets of her guests, but they were very soon brought to an end.¹ The trainer had given him an hospitable draught of wine, of a quality and potency to which he was not accustomed. This, swallowed while he was yet fasting, had upset his balance. Another flagon purchased at a wine shop hard by had completed his overthrow. The next

¹ *Non cuivis contingit adire Corinthum*, which may be translated by "It is not for every man to pay a visit to Corinth," is Horace's translation of a well known Greek proverb: οὐ παντὸς ἀνδρὸς εἰς Κόρινθον ἔσθ' ὁ πλοῦς.

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thing was a drunken brawl, for he was ever quarrelsome in his cups, and the end that in less than four hours after passing through the gate of Corinth he was in the custody of the guardians of the city's peace.

Archias had happened to be on his way back from one of the temples to his official residence when the disturbance took place, and he gave orders that the culprit should be brought before him at once. Half sobered by this fright, but not yet in full command of such faculties as he possessed, the man could think of nothing better than telling so much of the truth as would not absolutely incriminate him. He had come, he said, from Mantinea with a message from Eumenes, who had quite recently come to live in that city, to his son at Corinth. The message was to the effect that Eumenes was dangerously ill and desired to see his son without delay.

All this sounded sufficiently true. Archias was aware of his own knowledge that Eumenes had lately left Corinth to take up a situation at Mantinea, and that Eubulus was his son.

"Where," he asked, "did you deliver the message?"

"At the trainer's house," was the reply.

A slave was dispatched with instructions to find out whether this account was correct. The

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result appeared to be satisfactory. The trainer's narrative exactly bore out the statement of the accused. The message itself which Eubulus had left behind him in the hurry of departure, was produced, and seemed to be another link in the chain of evidence. It was exactly what the prisoner had described. Archias was about to discharge the man with a caution not to get into trouble, he salving the wound which he had inflicted with half a dozen drachmae, when an unexpected difficulty arose. The official who assisted the Archon when he was sitting on the Bench was an expert in documents, as indeed he needed to be. Frauds were very common, for they were easily committed. Signatures made in handwriting are frequently imitated; when they were made by the purely mechanical method of dipping a seal into ink or other liquid, imitations were easy enough and naturally more frequent. He now whispered to the magistrate that he had some questions to ask about the document just brought into court. There was something suspicious about it, and it would be well to hear what the prisoner had to say. The Archon gave him permission to interrogate the prisoner, and cross-examination began.

“Did you see Eumenes sign this letter?”

The prisoner would have done well to answer

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this question in the negative, and to say that it had been brought from the sick man's room, and handed to him for delivery, but he had a vague idea that by saying he had seen the signature affixed he would be adding to the apparent genuineness of the paper.

"You saw him dip the seal in the ink then?"

"Yes, I saw him."

The clerk's next remark was not made aloud, but whispered into the Archon's ear.

"As far as I can make out, the stuff into which the seal has been dipped is not ink at all, but a rude substitute for it."

Another question was addressed to the prisoner.

"And the paper? Where did the paper come from? Did you see the writer take it from a drawer or case, or was it handed to him?"

The prisoner's suspicions were aroused. These questions did not augur good. Immediately he stood on the defensive.

"I don't know anything about the paper. It was lying by him when I came into the room, and I know nothing more than that he signed it."

The clerk now made another whispered communication to the magistrate. He had made some discoveries about the paper. He recognized it as a kind that was sold by a certain dealer in

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Corinth, who received it direct from Egypt, and who used to declare that he had the monopoly of it. A piece of it might of course have found its way to Mantinea, but this was not very likely. Then, again, it looked as if it had been used before. Some writing could be faintly traced on the other side, one of the words looking somewhat like Corinth. On the whole the document had a somewhat suspicious appearance, and it seemed not unreasonable that the prisoner should be kept in custody till the matter could be more fully investigated.

The court in which these proceedings had taken place was open to the public, and while they were going on two persons had come in whose presence happened to be singularly opportune. The two were the Corsican captain and his now inseparable companion Rufus.

The two had been listening with the deepest attention to an account given them by a bystander of what had been going on. The prisoner, they were given to understand, had been taken into custody for taking part in a brawl, and had accounted for his presence in Corinth by saying that he had brought an urgent message to Eubulus the runner from his father at Mantinea. They had been long enough in Corinth to know something about Eubulus, whose name, indeed, was

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in every one's mouth. His mysterious illness and not less mysterious recovery had been freely canvassed. And the suspicion that things were not quite straight had been freely expressed. And now his name had turned up again. This time Rufus, who had a professional acquaintance with such matters, anticipated the conclusions of his companions. He had seen such devices practised, and had indeed taken part in practising them himself. When he perceived that the genuineness of the summons was questioned—for so much could be gathered from the questions addressed to the prisoner by the magistrate's clerk—he divined at once the character of the whole business.

"Depend upon it," he whispered to the Corsican, "this is another dodge to get at the runner. He has been enticed out of the city by a forged message, and there are fellows to lay hands on him. I have known such things done myself."

"Then tell the magistrate what you suspect," said the Corsican.

"I think that you had better do it," answered Rufus. "I must own that I am not quite at my ease when talking to gentlemen of his way of thinking."

The Corsican acknowledged the force of the remark, and rising from his seat at the back of

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the court, said in passable Greek acquired during frequent residences at Alexandria, that he had something for the private ear of the Archon. He was accordingly invited to take a seat on the Bench, Rufus modestly remaining meanwhile in the background. His story carried conviction. The suspicious departure of Ariston fitted in exactly with what had happened since. They could hardly doubt that the attempt to disable Eubulus having failed, he had been lured out of the city by a forged message and was probably by this time in the hands of the brigands.

CHAPTER XXV

A Dilemma

THE Archon was not a little struck by the energy and intelligence of the new comer, and proposed a further conference on the matter. The two accordingly retired to the magistrate's private apartment. What had happened was sufficiently plain. If the magistrate had entertained any lingering doubts, these were dissipated when the Corsican related to him what Rufus had said. "He would be here to repeat it," he went on, "but he has his prejudices, and just now he doesn't feel quite at ease when he sees a magistrate and his lictors and the other paraphernalia of a court. We may take it for granted, therefore, that the young man has been seized by the brigands. The question is—what is to be done?"

"The scoundrels will follow their usual course," said the Archon, "and will demand a ransom. And the ransom will have to be paid. It is not likely to be unreasonably large. The fellows

A Dilemma

know their business too well to ask impossible sums. Indeed, I have often wondered how nicely they suit their demands to what they are likely to get."

"I daresay," remarked the Corsican with a smile, "they have more friends in Corinth than anybody knows. They must certainly have some well-informed person to give them a hint."

"And the ransom will have to be paid," the Archon went on. "It is a hateful necessity. Again and again I have felt my blood boil when I had to make a treaty, as it were, with these low-bred villains. I do think that if Rome takes away our arms, she ought to protect us. When Corinth was her own mistress, these scoundrels would have been swept off the face of the earth before the month was out. All this, however, is beside the purpose. The ransom must be paid, and if the young man's friends have any difficulty in raising the money, I shall be glad to contribute."

"That is very kind of you," said the Corsican, "and what you say about paying the ransom is quite true. But there is another side to the affair which, if you will allow me to say it, you do not seem to have taken into consideration."

"Go on," said the magistrate; "I never supposed that I was infallible. A man must be a

A Dilemma

sad fool if he can sit in a court of justice for ten years, as I have done, without finding out that he can make mistakes."

"This, sir," replied the Corsican, "is not a common case of holding to ransom. These betting fellows are mixed up with it. Their object, of course, is to keep Eubulus from running. They tried to do it with poison, unless I am very much mistaken, and failed; now they have had recourse to another dodge, and I am afraid they are very likely to succeed."

At this moment Cleonicé, who was something of a spoiled child, and felt no hesitation about entering her father's sanctum, came into the room. The magistrate, who knew that it was his business to accept her will and pleasure, invited her to hear the matter in discussion. "And indeed," he went on, "we shall be very glad if you can throw any light upon it. My good friend here and I are very much perplexed. Perhaps you will be able to suggest something, and it ought to interest you, for it concerns the young man who pulled you out of the water the other day. To put the matter shortly, the brigands have laid hold of him, and we want to know how to get him out of their hands."

Cleonicé was quite sure that the matter did concern her. She was a little vexed at feeling

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the blush that rose to her face, but she did not pretend to any lack of interest.

"They will ask a ransom," she said, "and the ransom will have to be paid. There will be no difficulty, I suppose, about that. Eubulus has good friends in Corinth."

"Very true," replied her father, "but as my friend here points out, it is a matter of time. Eubulus must be back before the race is run, and that is now but a few days off. These ransom affairs cannot be finished quickly. Neither side trusts the other. And if the brigands choose to make delay, they easily can."

Cleonicé, after considering the problem to be solved, was obliged to confess that it puzzled her. Her father suggested a rescuing expedition, but soon allowed that it was impracticable. In the first place the city, though fairly well furnished with ordinary guardians of the peace, had no disciplined force at command, and this was a service, too, in which even an effective force may very easily fail. When the soldier is pitted against the brigand, he is very apt to be beaten. It is true that a State resolutely determined to clear its territory of banditti is bound to succeed sooner or later. But the success comes later rather than sooner. And, as has been said before, this was a question, and a very urgent question,

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of time. The brigands might be driven from their usual haunts, but they would find others. Wherever they went, they would take their prisoner with them ; and if pushed too hard, they might kill him. It would not be the best policy to do so, but temper, always a force not easy to calculate, and especially violent in men used to deeds of violence when they feel themselves driven into a corner, has to be reckoned with. The Corsican suggested that possibly the bearer of the false message might be made use of. He was a scoundrel, but still it might be made worth while even for a scoundrel to act straight. There was much to be said against the plan, but it might be better than nothing, and so might be used in the last resort.

Cleonicé left her father and the Corsican still debating, and retired to her chamber to think the matter over by herself. A little further reflection showed her that the first thing to be done was to communicate with Priscilla. That lady had showed so friendly and so practical an interest in the welfare of Eubulus, that it was her right to be at least informed of what had happened. To her accordingly the girl repaired without further delay.

But Priscilla, with all her acuteness, common sense and readiness of resource, could add nothing

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in conference. The dilemma still presented itself in all its cruel cogency. Force was inapplicable, and no adequate stratagem could be devised. The idea of employing the fraudulent messenger was hardly worth considering.

The situation had been discussed for half an hour or more without making any apparent progress when an idea suddenly presented itself to the girl's mind. She smote her hands together, and cried "By Hermes!" then she paused and excused herself to her companion, "I know that you don't like this way of talking, but it is an old habit, and the words were out of my mouth before I was aware. But it is really a happy thought, a godsend, if there ever was one. You know, or rather I should say, you don't know, that my foster-mother lives in one of the villages which lie near to the brigand headquarters. Her husband is the chief man of the place, and though he is supposed to be on the side of order, and would not, I am sure, lift his hand against a traveller, yet he is on good terms with the brigands. This is a kind of alliance that holds good, I take it, all the world over. The villagers, whose lot, after all, is a hard one—they do all the work and get but little for it—are paid for what they do, and the robbers, on the other hand, could not carry on without the villagers'

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goodwill. This good woman loves me as much as if I were her own child, and I am sure that she, and for the matter of that, her husband, would do anything they possibly could to help me. Yes! I will see whether I can't get Manto to do something for that unlucky young man."

"But how will you get at her," asked Priscilla. "Where is your messenger? Whom can you trust? Not that scoundrel, surely, who brought the forged letter?"

"No!" replied the girl, "certainly not. I would not trust him an inch further than I can see. No, I would sooner take the message myself."

"Well!" said Priscilla, "that would be one way of doing it. But let me tell my husband; perhaps he may be able to think of something."

Cleonicé was more serious than her friend imagined in what she said. "Yes, yes, tell him, and if he suggests anything, let me know at once." And she hurried back to her father's house.

CHAPTER XXVI

Cleonicé to the Rescue

WHEN Cleonicé got back to the Mansion-house she found her father and the Corsican still engaged in the discussion of the problem before them, and still far from any reasonable solution of it. She had been struck, as indeed was every one, with the energy and common sense which were obvious characteristics of the captain, and she determined to enlist him as her ally. Her scheme was as yet but dimly outlined in her mind, but she felt that it was one which it would be prudent to keep to herself. The first thing to be done was to have a confidential conversation with her new ally. This could be easily managed under cover of the hospitality which it was only common politeness to offer to a guest.

“Don’t you think, father,” she said, “that your friend would like some little refreshment? It is past noon, and I am sure that something to eat and drink would be welcome.”

“By all means,” said Archias. “It was very

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remiss of me not to think of it before. My daughter," he went on, turning to the Corsican, "will take you to the steward's room."

"Many thanks," said the Corsican, who had an intuition that the girl had something of importance to communicate. A touch of eagerness in her manner had suggested the idea, and he had caught it with the rapidity which made him so invaluable an assistant where promptitude of action was required. Cleonicé, however, was too hospitable to broach the subject that was uppermost in her mind till she had seen him seated at his meal, and indeed fairly well advanced towards the end.

"You see no way," she said, "of helping the young man?"

"No," he said, "I do not."

"Well then," she went on, "if you don't mind taking a hint from a woman, I think I do see a way."

"My dear lady," replied the man, "I not only don't mind taking such a hint, but I shall be delighted. I am quite sure that when the ladies condescend to trouble themselves about any matter whatever, they have a readier wit and a finer sense of what can and what cannot be done than we men can ever pretend to."

"Thanks for your compliment," said Cleonicé

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with a smile, "but mind what I say is in confidence ; you must tell no one, least of all my father and mother. And I look to you for help."

"Whatever you may tell me will be an absolute secret," said the captain.

"Listen then," replied the girl with a prettily imperious air which sat very well upon her. "I have a scheme for getting Eubulus back, and back in time to run the race, and that neither by force nor by purchase."

"Go on, madam, I am all attention."

"My foster-mother lives in the village close to the robber's headquarters : I mean her to do the thing for me, her or her husband."

"But," said the captain, "how will you communicate with her ?"

"I shall go myself."

The girl had been thinking hard all the time, and had come to the conclusion that this was the only thing to be done. Even if she could find a messenger, he could not do such an errand. Only a practical appeal could avail. It would try this woman's love to the utmost, for it was a dangerous service ; only a personal appeal, backed up by all the influence that she could bring to bear upon the heart of her foster-mother could possibly succeed. The Corsican was fairly

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taken aback. He was a man of audacious expedients, but this staggered him.

"You, dear lady, you?" he stammered out.

"Yes," answered the girl, "I—I myself, and I look to you to help me. Mind, I have your promise. You will keep the secret, and you will do what you can to back me up."

"I am not one to go back from my word," said the man, "but I must confess that I don't like it. The risk is too awful."

"Never mind about the risk—that is my lookout. I shall, of course, disguise myself as a boy. But that I have done for a joke before, and now the cause is serious enough in all conscience. I have thought out the whole plan. I have a little horse of my own that is kept in my father's stables; I shall ride that. There will be no difficulty about getting it. By good luck the man who looks after the horses does anything I tell him without asking a question. Will you come with me? I don't mean the whole way; the last bit, when I get near the end of my journey, I must be alone. But will you go with me as far as I think fit? If so, I will find a horse for you too. I must own that I should like to have your company as far as it is possible."

"Of course, my dear lady, I will come."

The captain had begun to recover from his

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surprise, and saw that the best thing he could do was to help this determined young woman as much as he could. After all, though it looked like a wild scheme, it was not wholly without promise. Then a thought flashed across his mind. Why not get Rufus to come also? A grim smile passed over his face as the idea occurred.

“Yes, I will come,” he repeated, “and if you agree, I will bring some one else with me who may be very useful. To tell you the truth, my friend was a robber himself not very long ago. But he is as true as steel. I was able to help him when he wanted help very much, and he is never likely to forget it. He is a stout man of his hands, if there ever was one, and, besides that, his old experiences may come in useful.”

CHAPTER XXVII

The Release

IT is needless to describe minutely the preparation of Cleonicé and her allies for their expedition to the hills. The Corsican and Rufus were provided with horses from the Archon's stables, and furnished themselves with arms such as could be carried without any display. Cleonicé, it is hardly necessary to say, made a very good-looking boy. She had to shorten her hair, but not to crop it, for it was the fashion for the young to wear it long, even beyond the limits of boyhood.¹ It was not wholly without a pang that she made this sacrifice, but it was not a time for hesitating at trifles. A skilful application of dye gave a sunburnt look to her face and hands. Altogether

¹ It was worn long up to the time when the boy became an *ephebus*, and this time was fixed at the completion of the eighteenth year. So Phaedo, who tells the tale of the last day of Socrates, as having been himself present, relates that the philosopher made a pleasant jest about his long hair.

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the disguise was as successful as could be desired. Everything was complete while the sun was still high in the heavens, and the start was made in such good time that the travellers might expect to reach their journey's end about sunset.

The plan of operations had of course to be left to Cleonicé, for she, and she alone of the three, knew anything about the region to be traversed. Her object was to reach her foster-mother's cottage without observation, and the way in which she hoped to accomplish this end was as follows. The road was bordered on one side by a wood, and she proposed that she and her companions should diverge into this while still two miles or so short of the place where the outposts of the robbers might be expected to be found. She had a thorough knowledge of the locality. When she was some ten years old she had paid a long visit to her foster-mother. Her health had seemed in some danger of failing, and the family physician had recommended a complete change of life. Archias had proposed to take a house somewhere out of Corinth, but the physician had declared that this would not be enough.

"She wants," he said, "something more than a change of air. You say that Sicyon is a bracing place, that it looks north, and so on. Very

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true ; I often recommend it for that reason. But that wouldn't help this child much. You take a house at Sicyon ; well, but she would be living there in exactly the same way as she is living here. 'No lessons,' you say. Very good ; but still the same atmosphere. The same abundance, the same luxuries—everything, in fact, the same. Now I want to change all that. She must live a different life ; she must be turned from an aristocrat into a peasant. There's her foster-mother. Why not send the child to her for a year ? Hardships ! Yes ; that is exactly what she wants. I would not put her into a family of the very poorest. That would be overdoing it. But a plain-living household, where they have the genuine peasant fare, that is the thing."

And so it was settled. Cleonicé went for a year to her foster-mother's cottage, and the change was as thorough as could be desired, and it had all the bracing and restoring effect upon her health that the physician had expected. It was then that she began to learn all the ins and outs, all the highways and byeways of the great wood at the edge of which the cottage stood. This knowledge she had increased by frequent visits in after years. When the summer was at its hottest in Corinth, Archias had taken the most commodious cottage

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in the village, and it had been the girl's delight to explore the forest recesses. The knowledge thus acquired she was now about to put to a use which she had certainly never anticipated.

She and her companions struck into a green road which would take them, she knew, by almost a straight line to the cottage. The distance was traversed without incident. When the party was about three hundred yards from its destination, she called a halt. There was a shed used by wood-cutters for sleep and meals when they were busy with their spring or autumn work. It was now unoccupied, and here the Corsican and Rufus were to wait, and she would join them when her errand had been accomplished.

Manto, the foster-mother, was busy preparing her husband's evening meal, when she was startled to see a quite unknown figure standing in the doorway of her cottage. For it was not only unknown, but of an appearance wholly unfamiliar. It was a handsome lad attired in an elegant riding costume whom she saw, and for a minute or so her powers of recognition absolutely failed her. Then her visitor bade her good-evening, and the voice—it is curious how we recognize voices, for the recognition is an absolutely unaided effort of memory—seemed to bring back some recollection. The recollection became more vivid when she

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heard a pet name which had been frequently on the lips of her foster-child in former days, and it became absolute recognition when the stranger threw his arms round her and kissed her on either cheek.

“Good Heavens, my darling! what is the meaning of this?” she gasped out. “You are not really changed, are you?”

Stories of change from youth to maiden and maiden to youth were among the legends told in Greek cottages of old days, and Manto had not failed to hear them.

“Changed!” cried Cleonicé. “Certainly not. I am still your dear daughter, as you are still my dear mother.”

“But what does all this mean—this riding coat and breeches? You make a very good looking young man, I must allow, my dear child; but still I like you better as you really are.”

“In a moment, dearest mother,” said Cleonicé. She was burning with impatience to do her errand, but she knew also that the subject must not be too abruptly introduced. “All in good time, mother,” she said; “but just tell me all about yourself and everybody. How is father?” Father was Manto’s husband, and she was always especially pleased when her foster-child called him by this name. “And Theon?” Theon,

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it should be said, was the foster-brother, who was then serving in the body guard of Herod Agrippa.

Her questions duly answered, she went on to give news of Tecmessa, and her baby, the finest baby, she said, in Corinth. It was not difficult, as may be readily understood, to bring in the name of Eubulus. Theon in former days had won a boys' race at the Isthmus and another at Nemea, and Manto, besides the common interest which all Greeks felt in the great national games, was always keen to hear about them. Cleonicé was strictly guarded in her praises of the young man, but she enlarged on the incident that had brought them together. Manto listened with rapt attention to the story of how her darling had been rescued from the imminent danger of drowning, grew pale with horror at the description, artfully prolonged and heightened in fact by the narrator, of the peril—"My clothes had kept me up so far, but I was just beginning to sink," she said—and was ready to do anything for the young hero who had come to the rescue at exactly the right moment. Now was the time, the girl felt, for introducing the business on which she had come. "And now," she went on, "the robbers have caught him. They sent a false message that his father was dying and wanted to see him. They have him

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somewhere here, and they will not let him go till the race is over. It will break his heart to lose it—perhaps they will kill him.”

“And you have come to rescue him? Oh, you brave child!”

This was quite true, but somehow, stated in this abrupt way, it struck the girl with confusion, especially when Manto looked at her with a penetrating glance. She coloured up to the roots of her hair.

“My father,” she began—then she remembered that her father knew nothing of what she was doing. “Well,” she stammered, “I could not help being interested, and trying to do something. All Corinth, you know, is wild about him.”

“Yes, dear,” said Manto, “and you love him,” going to the point with the directness of her class.

“Certainly not,” cried Cleonicé with another furious blush. “He hasn’t said a word about love to me.”

“That’ll come in good time, my dear,” said Manto, and she evidently considered the matter as good as settled. “But now what is it that you want me to do?”

“To set him free,” replied the girl.

Manto’s face fell. That was a very difficult and risky business, and she did not see how she was to

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set about it. Just at this moment the husband returned. He was carrying a basket, and was evidently in a great hurry.

"Give me a snack just to go on with," he said to his wife. "I have some business to do at the camp, and must do it at once. They"—he did not specify any further who was meant by the "they"—"have taken some one on the road, and I have been getting something for him from the inn. He seems to be a person of some importance, for he can't do, it seems, with common fare. I have got a roast fowl and a flask of Chian here for him, and I must take them to him, for he will be wanting his meal."

"Yes, father," said Manto, "but here is the dear child from Corinth, who wants to speak to you."

"The dear child from Corinth," repeated the man in amazement. "What do you mean?"

"Surely," said Cleonicé, "you haven't forgotten me, though I must allow that I am not dressed as usual."

There was no time to lose, and the story was told again. The shepherd, for this was the man's occupation, was not less taken aback than his wife had been.

"Set him free!" he exclaimed, when he saw what he was asked to do. "Set him free!"

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But what are Manto and I to do afterwards, for we shall certainly not be able to stay here any longer ? ”

“ I have thought of that, dear father,” said Cleonicé. “ That can easily be settled, if you are willing. My father has a farm about to become empty just now on the Sicyon road. He will put you into that, and you will be twice as comfortable as you are here, and nothing disagreeable to do.”

“ Well,” said the shepherd, “ I don’t want a reward. I am ready to do anything in my power for you, my dear child ; but one has to look ahead a bit. But now let us consider what is to be done.”

This was not difficult to see. The prisoner was in charge of two of the band. These would have to be disposed of in some way, and the readiest and safest way was to drug their drink. The shepherd, who had served the robbers for some years, was implicitly trusted. All his interests were supposed to be identical with theirs ; it was the accepted rule that he had a share in the ransom of a prisoner, and no one so much as imagined that he would ever have an interest in setting a prisoner free.

“ By good luck,” he said, “ I bought a couple of flasks. It would save me a journey, I thought to

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myself, to get it at once, and now the second will come in handy."

"But how about the drug?" said Manto.

"Oh!" replied the shepherd, "I have something here that will do perfectly well. It is something that I give the sheep now and then when they have the colic. I'll warrant that it does the business, and in pretty quick time, too. But now I must be off."

Everything went well. Eubulus, who had a happy faculty of getting on in every company, and making the best of every situation, was already on friendly terms with his guards. When the shepherd made his appearance with the fowl and the flask of Chian, he at once proposed to the men that they should pledge him in the wine. This he did out of simple *bonhomie*, but it worked into his deliverer's hands with admirable effect.

"Will you have it neat or mixed?" asked the shepherd. The men would have preferred the drink without water; but prudence prevailed.

"Well," said one of them, "for my part I think that water somewhat spoils the taste. But we have to be careful. Supposing that we should fall asleep? There would be a pretty to do?"

The shepherd retired to the kitchen of the hut to mix the bowl, and had, of course, an admirable

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opportunity of putting in the narcotic. When he returned with the doctored wine, he was thinking how he could manage to warn the young man against the beverage, and was not a little perplexed by the problem to be solved. Eubulus relieved him quite unintentionally. "For myself," he said, "I prefer water. I am in training, and wine does not suit me."

"The better for us," whispered one of the guards to the other, "though we must really be careful."

"Then, gentlemen," said the shepherd, "I will wish you good-night. I must be off home, where my wife is waiting supper for me."

He left the hut, but, of course, only to wait outside for so long as might be necessary before the drug did its work. It was amusing, or would have been amusing, to one not directly interested in the matter, to note the working out of the plan. The talk of the two men grew louder, then there was an attempt at singing, and in a few minutes absolute silence. The shepherd looked in, and saw that both the men were stretched on the floor, snoring loudly enough, it might have been said, to bring the house down. On this he slipped in, cut the string by which the prisoner's ankles were tied together, and the rope by which he was bound to a staple in the wall,



EUBULUS IN THE HANDS OF THE BRIGANDS.

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and whispered in his ear—he might have shouted the words for all power of hearing that was left to the guards—“Come along, sir, now is your time,” and he led the way to the cottage.

Manto meanwhile had been collecting her personal belongings. All the furniture of the cottage would have to be abandoned. Luckily there was very little of this ; the average cottage of the Greek labouring man was very scantily furnished. But she had a few ornaments, a necklace and such like, a band of coins, and some other trifles, and a gala dress. These things, with Cleonicé’s help, she made up into a bundle, not without tears, which the girl did her best to dispel.

Everything was ready when the shepherd returned. The meal was hastily dispatched, neither of the women, however, being disposed to share it. In less than half an hour they had rejoined the party in the barn. Rufus, who had the strongest horse, took up Manto behind him ; the Corsican and Cleonicé rode on before, and the shepherd with Eubulus made his way through the wood to the high road on foot. Before dawn on the following day they were all safe at Corinth.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Under Cover of the Law

OF the three confederates, two, as has been seen, had attempted to "get at" the favourite for the Long Race, and had failed. The third was now to take his turn. His scheme was more ambitious than theirs, and as they were very soon to find out, far more costly. The abortive effort to poison Eubulus had not cost much more than the price of the drug, to the bandits nothing had been paid. They were to be remunerated by the ransom which, as a matter of fact, they never got the chance of demanding. The scheme now to be tried was to bring against the young athlete a charge so serious that the authorities would be obliged to take action upon it. This charge was the taking part in a Secret Society. There was nothing against which the Imperial Government was so jealously on its guard, of which it was so sensitively suspicious as the Secret

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Society.¹ Its chiefs were perfectly well aware that under the outward order which their military power and the jealousies of the subject races combined to preserve, there was an immense mass of discontent, feelings of nationality, and recollections of lost freedom, and all the hostilities with which an Empire founded on conquest is regarded. For the Roman Empire was an Empire not of colonization but of conquest. It had colonies, certainly, but the colonies were not what we understand by the word. They were military posts set down in the midst of a conquered country. The crimes of a Secret Society were necessarily shrouded in darkness. So far they afforded a pretext for very vague charges. On the other hand these were not accusations that could be brought by the "man in the street" against any one whom he might wish to injure. They had to do with high politics, and had to

¹ Example may be found in the correspondence of the younger Pliny and the Emperor Trajan. Pliny had been sent as a special commissioner to the Province of Bithynia. While he was there a terrible fire almost destroyed one of the principal cities of the province. Pliny accordingly suggested that to guard against such possibilities in the future, a fire brigade should be created. The Emperor in his reply put a veto on the scheme. It would be a Secret Society, and as such dangerous.

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come with the prestige of an assured position. It would not be fitting for a party of betting men to come forward with such a charge. They must find some grave citizen to be their mouth-piece. The rogues were not at a loss. They knew one who would serve the purpose admirably. He was reputed to be a respectable citizen; he was really an unscrupulous intriguer, who made use of a good social position to enrich himself. Such a man's help was naturally costly. No promises would satisfy him. He wanted money down, and that to a considerable amount. Money down leaves no tell-tale traces behind it, and Aristagoras—for this was the well-placed scoundrel's name—was well aware that if no such traces existed, his word would hold good against any hostile assertions. The confederates had ready to hand some *prima facie* evidence of their charge. They watched all the movements of Eubulus, and of course knew that he was a frequent visitor at the house of Aquila. But they found out that there were many visitors to the house besides the young athlete, and further that the visitors were almost entirely Jews. Another discovery was that the visitors came at regular times. Then they got a little further. A silly young Jew had put himself in their power by making wagers that he could

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not pay. They induced him to make acquaintance with one of the visitors. This was easy enough, for these visitors had no idea of doing anything unlawful, and they were ready to believe that what interested them would interest others. The report that the young man brought back was not a little confused and perplexing. But it contained hints, or what might be construed into hints, sufficient to serve their purpose. He had certainly caught some phrases about a new kingdom. These alone would be enough to proceed upon. It must not be supposed that these meetings at Aquila's house were assemblies of Christians, of people who had a definite belief such as we should describe by that name. The men who frequented them were inquiring Jews. Such there were in every Jewish community. It was St. Paul's practice to visit the Synagogue of every city to which his travels brought him, and to set forth, as long as he was permitted to do so, the principles of his faith. Doubtless St. Paul used more definite language than Aquila would be able to do; Aquila himself would be far in advance of many who were more or less in sympathy with him.¹

¹ As we know, for instance, he was in advance of Apollos. See Acts xviii.

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But there was movement in the air. It is easy to imagine, in view of the grave political troubles which did actually arise less than twenty years after the time of which I am now writing, troubles which were already doubtless beginning, that the Roman Government was deeply suspicious of the Jewish communities.

Aristagoras now felt that he had sufficient pretext for action. Accordingly he sought an audience of Gallio, the matter being obviously for the representative of the Imperial government, rather than for the head of the Corinthian municipality. Gallio received him in private, with no one present but his secretary, and bade him state his case. Aristagoras put it forth with no little skill, and certainly did not suffer the few facts that he had to lose any of their importance. He spoke of meetings of Jews in the house of a prominent member of the community, and of the frequent attendance of Eubulus, known to be regarded with uncommon favour by the whole population of Corinth, at the house of the same person. This might very likely mean a serious damage to the public peace.

Gallio heard the story with considerable doubt. He did not know much about Aristagoras, but he had some suspicion of his sincerity. The fine instinct of a well-born, well-read man told

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him that there was something not quite genuine about him. His secretary also, when appealed to, had nothing very favourable to say. Aristagoras was in a good position, he knew, but was not in the very best odour. Still the matter was not one which Gallio felt himself justified in ignoring. He knew that the Home Government regarded such accusations as very important matters. He had his private opinions, but it was not for him to act upon them in his official capacity. He consented to receive the deposition of Aristagoras. This was duly drawn up in form by the secretary, and signed by the informer.

But when Aristagoras went a step further, and sought to have Eubulus arrested, Gallio met the request with a distinct refusal. "I have consented," he said, "to receive your accusation, though it is, as you must be aware, very vague. Still, it is not for me to ignore an affair which may possibly be of more importance than it appears to me at present—for so much I do not hesitate to say—to possess. But when you ask me to arrest the young man, I feel bound to say 'No.' I do not know, sir, whether you, occupied, as you doubtless are, with graver matters, are aware how the young man is situated. Anyhow, I may tell you that he is about to take

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part in the Games, and that he is confidently expected to win the Long Race. It would hardly be fair to make such a victory impossible by arresting him. These charges often come to nothing, more often than not, as far as I can judge by my experience in office. If that should happen in this case, I should have inflicted a very serious injury on the young man and his friends. On the other hand there is no danger of the accused escaping. He is a public character. He is the object of universal observation, all the more so as he has been the object of two somewhat singular attacks. No, sir, I decline to arrest Eubulus; when the race is over I will make inquiry. Meanwhile, to avoid any chance of injury to the common weal I will give such instructions as will ensure his being watched. He is no more likely to try to leave Corinth than I am. Still, I will have him watched."

Aristagoras was forced to be content with this. As he turned to leave the audience chamber, Gallio regarded him with a scornful smile. "I strongly suspect, my good man," he said to himself in a low voice, "that you have a hand in these villainous plots."

CHAPTER XXIX

The Games

THE action of Aristagoras, as described in the last chapter, was known to but very few, but the affair of the bandits was no secret, and the failure of the attempt made an immense sensation in Corinth. The popularity of the young man was worked up into something like frenzy. That very dignified person, the Roman Governor, condescended to send one of his lictors with a message of sympathy and congratulation. A great number of the townspeople formed themselves into a Committee of Vigilance. The trainer's house was guarded day and night by companies of volunteers, who took their time of duty and were relieved in regularly military fashion. The place of exercise was similarly protected. Eubulus himself, as soon as he showed himself outside the trainer's house, became the object of popular demonstrations which were

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certainly flattering, but which caused him no little annoyance. Happily this state of affairs soon came to a natural end. The first day of the Games—they lasted five days in all—arrived, and it might be assumed that for the present at least the machinations of the young man's enemies had failed.

At an early hour in the morning, which, appropriately enough, was one of brilliant sunshine, all Corinth, crowded as it was to its utmost capacity of reception, was astir. The spot where the Games were celebrated was about six miles from the city in a south-easterly direction, and about a mile from the sea. The road was crowded with pedestrians. Over and above the multitude of sight-seers there was a great number of itinerant dealers in wine, sweetmeats and a variety of other articles suited to the wants or caprices of a crowd bent on making holiday. Now and then a public conveyance, heavily laden with passengers, would come along, or the chariot of some wealthy citizen. A little later in the day the carriages of the magistrates of the city and of the Roman Governor himself were to be observed. It may be remarked that the crowd consisted entirely of men ; no women were allowed to be present at the Games, with the single exception of the Priestess of Athené.

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Even this exception was maintained only in form. The priestess asserted her right by taking her seat in the marble chair assigned for her use opposite the enclosure occupied by the judges of the Games. She was very properly unwilling to surrender a privilege which had come down to her from an immemorial antiquity. This done, she vacated her place, naturally not caring to be the sole representative of her sex in a company which must have numbered at least a hundred thousand. This remark, however, does not apply to the fifth day, when there was a competition of music and singing. At this women were permitted both to compete and to assist as spectators, and this, as may be supposed, was one of the most popular and brilliant spectacles of the festival.

The first day of the Games was spent for the most part in ceremonial. The judges formally took their seats. It was their business to decide any point of difference that might arise. They were all Corinthian citizens. The right of presiding had belonged to Corinth from time immemorial, and was, as may be supposed, most jealously guarded. It had passed to Sicyon during that dismal century of desolation which succeeded the destruction of the city by Mummius, but it had been given back to the new

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foundation of Caesar.¹ The chief of the company was, of course, the Archon, who occupied the place in right of his official position. In a matter which concerned sentiment rather than important interests the Roman Governor discreetly gave way to the traditional dignity of his subordinate. Then came the solemn reception of the envoys sent by the other cities of Greece. It was a ceremony sadly shorn of its old splendour, for, alas! some of the cities which had been wont in former times to send embassies to the Isthmus were by this time little better than heaps of ruins. Argos was still able to furnish representatives; but Sparta, which no longer could claim any supremacy over other towns of Laconia, had been obliged to abandon the custom. The envoys from Athens carried off the palm for splendour of equipment, for Athens, long since become insignificant as regards political power, was still important in the domain of letters and

¹ The destruction of Corinth took place in 146 B.C. Its rebuilding by Julius Caesar, who sent thither a colony of veteran soldiers and of personal dependents, took place after exactly a century. Caesar was assassinated about a year and a half later, but the progress of the new city was not hindered by the death of its patron. It advanced in wealth and population with wonderful rapidity, and in the course of another hundred years was as prosperous and as popular as ever.

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learning. Some new visitor might be noticed, representing some city which had but recently acquired its wealth and was all the more eager to assert its connection with the ancient celebrations of Greece. All the envoys were magnificently attired in purple robes richly embroidered with gold, and wore jewelled diadems. After the reception of the embassies came the customary sacrifices, ceremonies which it is not necessary to describe. Every archaic detail from the stone knife downwards was strictly observed, all the more strictly the more completely the old spirit of reverence and worship had passed away.¹ The sacrifices finished, came the midday meal, an affair which varied from the splendid banquet served to the judges by the command of Gallio to the very simple *al fresco* meal of the poorer spectators, bread and olives or onions, with possibly a relish of salt fish. After the meal came a review of the candidates. They presented themselves to the judges, gave their names, parentage and birthplace; no person of non-Greek descent was permitted to enter, and

¹ It was customary to begin the slaying of the victims with a stone knife, but this, after a merely formal beginning, was laid aside for the more convenient steel. The stone had, of course, come down from an immemorial antiquity.

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some few places were by tradition excluded.¹ These were solemnly entered in a register by the official who acted as secretary to the judges. This done, the president of the judges addressed an exhortation to the candidates. He warned them against all dishonourable practices; told them to look beyond the mere distinction of victory, and said some wise words of advice, calculated to temper undue exultation in the successful, and unreasonable depression in those who might fail. This address finished, the spectators were warned, under the threat of severe punishment, not to interfere in any way with the competitors. They were reminded that the one thing all ought to desire and strive for was the welfare and glory of the Hellas that was the mother of them all; that every Greek ought always—and especially on these occasions, which were, as they had been from time immemorial, the great festivals of the race—to forget his own tribe, his own city, to desire the victory of the best man, the swiftest, strongest, most agile, most ready of wit and nimble of limb, whether

¹ So it was against custom, if not against actual law, for any native of the region of Elis, excepting only the town of Lichaeum, to enter for an Isthmian contest. This doubtless had its origin in the fact that Elis had the right of managing the Games of Olympia, the great rival of the Isthmian celebration.

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he were Ionian or Dorian, Athenian or Spartan, Greek of the mainland or of the Peloponnese, of the Islands, or the far-off Colonies of East or West.

This brought the regular proceedings of the day to a close. The vast meeting then resolved itself into a great social gathering. At the same time business was not forgotten. The Greek, with all his sentiment, had always a keen eye to the main chance. These occasions were convenient for the meeting of those who had transactions to conclude or schemes to talk over, and a detached observer, had he passed from group to group, might have heard the most multifarious variety of affairs discussed. The great Isthmian assembly rivalled, or even surpassed in this respect, even its great Olympian rival. It had, it is true, no such splendid associations as had the little town on the coast of Elis, but it was far more conveniently situated for the commerce of the world.

The second day was given to the boys' competitions. The lads ran and wrestled and boxed, to the intense interest of their fathers and other kindred. This part of the festival was, in one sense, the most satisfactory. Both the competitors and their friends took a frank and simple interest in the struggle, and there

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was very little of the noxious element of betting.

On the third day began the competitions of the men, and the first of these to be taken were the foot races. The reason for this is obvious. A foot race did not interfere with any other competitions, but it might itself be interfered with by others. A wrestler might wrench an ankle; a boxer might receive some blow that would seriously damage his chances as a runner.

The short race¹ was the first run. Here the distance was two hundred yards or thereabouts. Eubulus had at one time intended to compete, and would in all probability have won it, for he was known to have for a short distance an unrivalled speed. But his trainer had persuaded him to stand out. The two adverse experiences through which he had passed had not, to all appearance, left any traces behind. Still it was possible that they had told upon him in some way which would show itself only when the reserve of strength was called upon. There was a certain disappointment in the crowd of spectators when his well-known figure was missed in the line of starters, but it was generally recognized that his action in reserving all his energies

¹ Called the Stadium.

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for the great effort of the long race was judicious.¹

When that important event came on, it was seen that the reputation of Eubulus had had the effect of diminishing the number of competitors. We have seen how Dromeus disappeared ; others retired for the more creditable reason that they were manifestly outpaced by the young Corinthian, that it was only by the merest accident they could hope to beat him, and that such an accident was not worth waiting for. The consequence was that the starters were not numerous enough to make it necessary to have more heats than one.

An admirable start was effected, Eubulus being, if anything, a little later than his competitors in springing from the line. This he did by the trainer's instruction. With a well-grounded confidence in his favourite pupil's superiority to his rivals, the man had said, "Don't

¹ We call it "the long race," but it does not seem long as judged by the practice of modern pedestrianism. It is true that there are different opinions about the distance traversed, but the commonly accepted notion is that this distance was seven stadia, equal to 1,358 yards, not quite four-fifths of a mile. A present-day runner would look upon this distance as neither one thing nor the other. In the representations of long-race runners which have come down to us the attitude with the arms pressed close to the sides is that which pedestrians running a long distance would assume.

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give them a chance to complain ; you will soon have it all your own way." And have it his own way he certainly did. The race, in fact, was a surprise to his most confident backers, and nearly went to the extent of revolutionising the pedestrian art in Corinth. Eubulus "sprinted," to use the technical term of foot-racing, from the beginning. To the astonishment and even dismay of his friends he started at full speed, and to the astonishment of his enemies he kept up this speed with but the slightest slackening, if any, to the end. Whether any demonstration of the adverse party had been intended can never be known. This amazing performance took the whole assembly by storm. There was a dead silence as he shot in front of the rank of runners, took at once a manifest lead, and increased it every second. "Making the pace" was a dodge known on the stadia of antiquity as it is on the modern running path, but this competitors plodding on in the stolid way which was no dodge. It was ludicrous to see the other was a second nature to them, while this latter-day Achilles sprang lightly forward. One could hardly think that they and he were engaged in the same contest. Of the issue, there could, of course, be no doubt. Sheer astonishment kept the assembly silent till the end was reached ; but



THE LONG FOOT RACE.

The Games

when Eubulus came in at least a hundred yards ahead—he accomplished the distance, it may be said, in 3 min. 36 sec.—there went up such a shout as had never before been heard on the Isthmus.

The rest of the contests that took place that day need not be described. The wrestlers, the boxers, the competitors in that most arduous of all the competitions, the Pancratiun, received perhaps less attention than usual. The victory of Eubulus had taken off the edge, so to speak, of the popular interest. Still there was a sufficiency of applause, and the meeting, as a whole, might be safely pronounced to be a success. But the great sensation of the day was yet to come. When at the close of the competitions a herald proclaimed the names of the successful competitors, and announced as “Victor in the Long Race, Eubulus, son of Eumenes,” and one of the spectators stepped forth from the crowd that stood round, and said, “I object to Eubulus, reputed son of Eumenes,” with an emphasis on the word “reputed,” there ensued, as may be easily supposed, a prodigious tumult.

CHAPTER XXX

The Casket

THE judges at once adjourned the inquiry to the private room provided for them in one of the buildings that adjoined the course, and began by calling on the objector for a *prima facie* justification of the course which he had taken. By common repute, they said, Eubulus is the son of Eumenes, for many years a well known and generally respected inhabitant of Corinth. His name is so entered in more than one public document. He contended in this name, and was so described in a boys' competition, and no objection was taken. The objector answered this appeal in what seemed to be a perfectly straightforward fashion. He had first hand evidence, he said, of the truth of what he alleged, and this he was ready to produce on the spot. If the judges would wait for something less than a single "water,"¹ he would bring the witness

¹ The term occupied by the water running through a measuring glass. So many glasses were allowed to a speaker in the courts of justice, and the time may be taken as roughly equal to half an hour or something less.

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before them. The witness was a woman, and he had not been able to bring her within the sacred precincts as long as the Games were actually in progress. The brief adjournment was, of course, granted. The time had barely expired when the objector reappeared, bringing with him a middle-aged woman of respectable appearance, and, indeed, well known in the city by name and repute. She followed the occupation of a sick nurse, and was well thought of for skill and, what was perhaps less common in those days, not to speak of later times, for honesty. Her testimony was perfectly clear and to the point. Something more than twenty-one years before she had been summoned to attend what had been described to her as a case of serious illness. The messenger who brought the summons had taken her to a house in Corinth which she knew as one let from time to time to temporary residents in the city. It was large and well furnished, and the rent demanded for the use of it amounted, she knew, to a considerable sum of money. The patient had expired before she reached the place, apparently in consequence of the rupture of a blood vessel. She was a young and beautiful woman. All the belongings of the bedchamber betokened refinement and wealth. On the fingers of the deceased

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were several richly jewelled rings. By the side of the bed sat a man of middle age, considerably older, she thought, than the dead woman. He seemed to be stupefied with grief, and took no notice of her presence. After a while, however, he seemed to rouse himself, and struck a hand-bell which stood on a table by his side. A young man dressed as a slave appeared in answer to the summons. A conversation carried on in a low voice followed. When this was concluded, the master left the room and the young slave then delivered the message, with which, as it seemed, he had been entrusted. The purport of it was this. Would the nurse wait for some time, possibly three or four hours, till he had made his arrangements? A change had been made necessary on the sudden death of his wife. She would be fully recompensed for any trouble that she might have to take or any inconvenience to which she might be subjected. He was instructed meanwhile to offer her anything in the way of food or drink that she might want. He was also to introduce her to a child for whom her good offices would be asked, but in what way and to what extent it was not at present in his power to say. The slave then conducted her to an adjoining chamber, also richly furnished, where there was a boy child, apparently three

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or four months old, asleep in a cradle, in the charge, as it seemed, of an elderly woman. After the lapse of about four hours, the young slave reappeared and conducted her back to the chamber to which she had been first brought. The dead body had been removed, and the husband, as she supposed him to be, was collected and calm. He asked her whether she knew Eumenes of Sicyon, putting the question, for so it struck her, as if he were quite confident of receiving an answer in the affirmative. As a matter of fact she did know him well. He then went on, "I wish you to take the child whom you have seen in the next room to Eumenes and his wife; he is, I know, recently married. Hand them this casket, this letter and this bag of gold. Here are ten gold pieces for your own trouble. I have set free those two slaves—they are mother and son—giving them enough to keep them from want for the future. For myself I shall wait here till you return with an acknowledgment from Eumenes and his wife that they have accepted the charge which I have asked them to undertake."

The woman concluded her story thus,

"I took the casket with the letter and the money, the child being carried for me by the woman whom I have mentioned. Before long I brought back the acknowledgment de-

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sired. The stranger received it from me in silence, and I saw him no more. The next day I heard that a man had been found dead, apparently from the effects of poison, in the house before mentioned."

"Is this," asked the Archon, "the first time you have told this story?"

The woman looked distressed. "Yes," she said, "it is, except that I told my husband at the time what had taken place. He has been dead about two years. He was a very good husband to me, but a little wine got into his head, and at such times he let his tongue run away with him."

The Archon was extra-judicially acquainted with the fact that Eumenes had left Corinth, and that he had transferred the guardianship of his son to Aquila and Priscilla, and he suggested that the Jew should be sent for, and invited to communicate to the judges any information that he might happen to possess. But it was not necessary to send for him; he was already in waiting, for intelligence of the objection having been lodged had reached him, and he felt sure that the time was come for opening the casket. This he had accordingly brought with him, and he had also taken care to have the letter which he had received with it from

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Eumenes ready for inspection. No little sensation was produced when he answered to his name, and intimated to the judges that he was possessed of documents the contents of which, though wholly unknown to him in detail, would, he felt confident, clear up the mystery that surrounded the birth of Eubulus. The question arose whether the court of judges, constituted as it was, and open to the public, was a proper tribunal for an investigation which might be of a delicate kind. Finally it was agreed that a committee of two should be asked to examine the documents in the first instance. The Archon was naturally one of the two, and the senior judge was the other; they were to invite Gallio the Proconsul to act as their president. Gallio, who was on the spot, at once consented, and the inquiry was commenced without further delay.

The president of the committee opened the casket in the presence of his colleagues, and took out its contents. These were a paper closely written on both sides and a small leather bag, containing some twelve jewels of great size and evidently of great value. The writing was a singularly beautiful script, which did not require more than a few minutes to read. When the Proconsul had mastered its contents, he handed it to the

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Archon, and the Archon, having perused it, passed it to his colleague. It ran thus—

“I who write these words am by name Alexander, son of Philip, and by family of the royal house, or I should rather say of what was the royal house, of Macedonia, being sixteenth in descent from that Alexander who befriended the Greeks in the days of Xerxes. My genealogy, with such proofs as may be wanted to support it, is laid up in the municipal archives of the city of Pella. I will not describe the various perplexities and troubles which this descent has brought upon me. The heirs of royal houses which Rome has brought to the ground—and of such there are many—the representatives of parties which have failed to acquire or to retain power; the members of families which have not succeeded in their ambitions—all these have sought in me a possible ally or confederate. I will not mention the names of any, lest haply I should do any an injury. Let it therefore suffice to say that I had made a resolve in my mind that I would be the last of my race. But who is master of himself or of his own fate? No one certainly—least of all when Aphrodite takes to herself the spindle of Clotho and weaves the web of his fate. I loved a woman more good and more beautiful than words can say. My love woke in me the

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hope that I might yet cheat my fate. I would retire to some place where the gods of the country, Pan and Silvanus and the Dryad Sisterhood, extend a benignant patronage to the tillers of the soil. For awhile all things went well with us; a son was born to us, and I thought to myself, 'I have provided him a peaceful inheritance which the malignant desires and ambitions of cities should not mar; it will be enough for him if he gathers the fruits of the harvest which I plant.' Alas! I had not reckoned with the envy of fate. My wife sickened of some dread disease; I took her to Corinth in hope that one of the physicians of that city might heal her. She died. More I cannot say, for I am writing this while her body is being prepared for the funeral fires. Then I came to this resolve. I will hand over my son to the care of some virtuous couple of the burgher class. They shall bring him up to their own condition of life, to the occupation, humble but useful, which they themselves follow. I hope that thus he will escape the fate which has haunted me. Nevertheless, remembering that from fate no man can escape, I have provided against the chance that my plans may be defeated. I can see that it may become necessary to reveal that which I desire to hide, that circumstances

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may require that my son shall cease to be a mechanic and be shown to be a descendant of kings. I therefore deposit in this casket the secret of his race."

A pause of some duration followed the reading of this document. Gallio broke it by announcing a decision which his colleagues promptly recognized as indicating the only course which under the circumstances could be followed. He said: "We will dismiss the objection to the Greek descent of Eubulus, and will announce that it has been proved to our entire satisfaction that in this respect the competitor is fully qualified as victorious in the Long Race to receive the Crown of Pine, and we will add, if it pleases you, some special distinction on account of the unprecedented character of his victory. But the strange revelation of the young man's parentage makes it necessary to act with the utmost prudence in dealing with the charge which has been brought against him. It is manifest, indeed, to us that he is wholly free from any guilty knowledge of plans adverse to the public welfare. Yet they who govern this Empire are bound to be on their guard against all possible danger, and they rightly expect caution and discretion from those to whom they delegate their power. I dare not release on my own responsibility one

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who may by some possibility, however remote, become dangerous to the peace of the world, Eubulus must go to Rome and must answer for himself before Caesar. I am sure that he will suffer no harm from the magnanimous Claudius, secure as he is in his own virtues and in the favour of the gods. He shall go, not as a criminal, but as one to whom, both for his own sake, and for the sake of those who have gone before him, Rome will gladly do honour. I will take care that the dispatch which accompanies or precedes him shall do justice to him in every way."

CHAPTER XXXI

Rewards and Punishments

THE decision of the committee of the judges was announced by the Archon on the morning of the fourth day. It was usual at the Games, as it is usual in similar celebrations in this country to reward the winners at the close of the festival ; but in this case the Presidents determined, and for what seemed to them quite sufficient reason, to make an exception in favour of Eubulus. The pine-crown was to be put on his head just before the beginning of the contests of the day. The Archon, accordingly, stepped forward to the front of the official "box," if the term may be permitted, occupied by the judges, and spoke as follows :

"We have examined the objection made to the parentage of Eubulus, first runner in the Long Race, have taken evidence, and have come to the conclusion that he was qualified to compete. Indeed, we may say that there is no one in the whole of Hellas, who, so far as ancestry is concerned, is more fit to win and wear the

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honours of the fleet of foot. More I will not say at present. You will soon know what I mean. That he is not a Corinthian born we regret, but we must not grudge him a distinction of race which even Corinth cannot match. That he is a Corinthian by adoption we gladly remember; the city will not fail to reckon this among its glories. But we must not forget that he has not found among us all that he might have looked for. Loyal friends he has had, and such popular favour as has seldom been surpassed,"—here there went up from the crowd a great shout of applause—"but, unless report has been strangely false, he has had bitter enemies, has been the object of violence, conspiracy, and malignant accusation. Young man," went on the magistrate, turning to Eubulus, "you have escaped these dangers; you have baffled these enemies. Much, I doubt not, you owe to your own virtues; you owe more, I am sure, to the favour of the gods, which, indeed, is not given save to those who are worthy of it in body, soul, and spirit. That you have surpassed all who have preceded you in this place I will not say; the heroes, the children of the gods, have deigned to wear the crown which you have won. But this I will say, you have achieved a singular victory under singular diffi-

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culties, and we mark our sense of an uncommon virtue by an uncommon honour. Be worthy of it to the end ; be as patient, as brave as you have shown yourself hitherto, and do not doubt—for it is not the gods that change, but men that are not equal to themselves—that you will be as fortunate.”

Shouts of deafening applause rose again and again from the crowd as Eubulus stepped forward and received from the hands of the Archon first the palm branch and then the Crown of Pine.

The unprecedented departure from the order of proceedings described above brought well-merited disaster to Cleon and his associates. If they had been wise they would by this time have left Corinth far behind them. But this was practically impossible. They had not the means to do so, for they were almost penniless. The bribe to Aristagoras had swept away all that was left to them, and if they were to get away it would have to be either by begging or by working—alternatives which were equally unwelcome. The visit to the racecourse was, therefore, something like a necessity. They hoped to pick up a few trifles here and there. They had, as may be supposed, at command as many ways of accomplishing this as had any rogues in the world. Cards, it is true, had not been in-

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vented, but there were dice,¹ the die proper and the knuckle-bone, and dice could be loaded. But it is needless, even if it were possible, to recapitulate the devices of an old-world swindler. The evil ingenuity of mankind has doubtless added to their number, but there were plenty available to a knave even in the year 50 A.D. But their chief hope was in getting in advance some of the money due to them for bets which they had won, by offering to take a composition. None was actually payable till after the crowning of the successful candidate on the conclusion of the Games. This made it safe for them to appear, and it also gave them a chance of getting a few pounds into their possession. They would say to a debtor, "If you can pay up now we will take two-thirds or three-fourths of the money," giving such reasons as might be suited to the silliness or credulity of their victims. It was not a very promising device, but it was better than nothing, and every shilling they contrived to lay hold of in this and in any other way would be so much gain. They had come with the rest of the crowd to hear the decision of the judges, and they saw, of course, that the immediate coronation of Eubulus was a fatal blow. They turned to fly—flight with or without means was

¹ The *tessera* with six sides and the *talus* with four.

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now a necessity—but it was too late. The Corsican, with Rufus, still his constant associate, had dogged their steps, and stood between them and escape.

“Not so fast, my fine fellows,” he cried; “there are a good many friends here who would like to have a word with you before you go.”

Retribution was at hand for the scoundrels, and was likely to be as complete as the sternest lover of justice could desire. The “welsher”—it may be explained that the word means a low-class better who cannot pay his bets—was wont to meet with as little mercy on the racecourse of antiquity as he meets with at Epsom or Doncaster. And the three were more than “welshers.” Their misdeeds were not fully known to the crowd that rapidly gathered round the Corsican and his captives, but some were sure and many more suspected that they had practised against the life of Eubulus, the most popular candidate that Corinth had known within the memory of man. And here they were. What was to be done with them?

The Corsican apprehended the situation in a moment. Leave these fellows to the vengeance of the mob, and by the time one had counted a hundred, there would not be one of them left alive. This was

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not a result which he desired. He had not a grain of compassion for the villains ; whatever they might suffer would be less than their deserts. But still it would be better that they should not be killed. Death, even the death of such worthless creatures as these, would cast a gloomy shadow over what was a day of triumph and joy. He saw his way in a moment. "Let them run the gauntlet!" he cried, and the suggestion was taken up with a tumult of applause, and so the stadium was put to a use for which it certainly was not intended. The three rogues, stationed some ten yards apart—by a rude justice the eldest, as presumably the least active, had the least distance to run—were started, and had to make their way as best they could along the line of spectators. No one had any deadly weapon wherewith to strike the runners—it was forbidden to carry weapons within the precincts of the Games—but there were belts and other implements handy, and in default of anything better a sandal or a shoe. It is probable that even from this ordeal not one of the three would have escaped alive but for an interruption to the sport which the Corsican had foreseen. The keepers of the course were scandalized at the base use to which it was being put, and, as soon as they had recovered from their astonishment,

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interfered and put an end to it. It was about time. Cleon and Ariston lay bleeding and senseless on the ground ; Democles was staggering on alone. The keepers carried them off the ground and put them in safety in one of the buildings that adjoined the course. It is needless to pursue their story any further. A few days later, when they had recovered sufficiently to be able to walk, they were conducted to the frontier of the State, and summarily ordered to depart. They were given to understand that if they were seen again in Corinth they would be less leniently treated.

CHAPTER XXXII

Back to Rome

WHILE the enemies of Eubulus were thus receiving their due, his friends found themselves in no small perplexity. After giving his evidence, Aquila had hurried home with all possible speed. The matter had to be talked over with Priscilla, and that without any loss of time. There was very little difference of opinion between the two as to what was to be done, though Priscilla, with her more impetuous nature, was the first to put into definite shape what was really their common judgment. "The boy," she cried—a woman always thus reduces the age of any one whom she cares about—"the boy cannot possibly be allowed to go alone."

"You are right," answered Aquila, "he cannot go alone. And I see no alternative but that we must go with him. But it is a terrible risk. The decree of banishment is barely two months old, and we are going to break it openly."

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“Not we,” said Priscilla. “I have not been banished. Why should not I go and leave you safely here?”

“That is impossible,” replied Aquila. “Not that you would not manage everything as well as I could; but things being as they are, it is impossible.”

Priscilla reluctantly acknowledged that it was “We will disguise ourselves,” she said; “that ought not to be very difficult.”

Aquila smiled. “Not for me, perhaps. But how about you? You are not one to be hid in a crowd. Still, whatever the risk, you are right; we must go.”

Nothing could be done that evening, but early the next morning Aquila was at the harbour of Cenchreae. He had business which could not be postponed to transact there, and he might find, he thought, some ship bound for Italy. Two days of the Games yet remained, and it might be a good thing to be early in the field. The Games ended, Corinth would be emptying as rapidly as it had filled.

While he was looking about him he observed a small sailing vessel rowed with sweeps up to the quay side. It was made fast to the quay, from which a gangway was pushed out, and some five or six passengers landed. Two sailors

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carried after them a few articles of luggage. One of the passengers was obviously a person of some importance, at least in the eyes of his fellow-travellers. One of these supported his steps as he passed along the gangway, and another looked out for a seat on the quay where he might be sheltered from the sun. There was no sort of distinction about his general appearance, which was indeed insignificant. He was short of stature, and stooped, but his countenance was of an aspect so remarkable that no one who saw it could ever forget. The eyes, though to an expert's look they betrayed the signs of ophthalmia, were singularly brilliant and penetrating, and the whole expression was full of energy. While Aquila was considering who this stranger might be, he was accosted by one of the newcomers, and recognized his friend Trophimus.

"I think you will be able to help us," the man said; "our fellow-traveller whom you see is Paul of Tarsus. We had heard at Philippi, which we left about seven days ago, that you were living in Corinth, and we thought you might be able to give the master a home."

"By all means," cried Aquila. "Will you introduce me to him?"

"Well," replied Trophimus, "this will require a little management. He makes a great point

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of earning his own livelihood, and especially in a commercial place like this, where he thinks the man who shows himself careless of gain is likely by the force of contrast to be appreciated. So, if you please, we will find a shelter for him for a day or two, and then bring in the subject of your occupation. He is a worker like you in Cilician cloth, and it would please him greatly to think that he will be earning, by his own special handiwork, his own living."

With this Aquila had, of course, to be content. The prospect of entertaining such a man was most attractive, and he did not realize for a while that it would interfere with the proposed journey to Rome. But when on reaching home, he put the whole matter to Priscilla, the truth became at once evident to both of them. The idea of accompanying Eubulus to Rome would have to be given up; it would be indeed no pleasure journey, but still it had its attraction, even in the danger which they would both incur for the sake of one whom they loved. On the other hand, the opportunity of finding a home for the great Apostle of the new faith was a manifest call of duty, and must have precedence over everything else.

They had come, not, as may be supposed, without great reluctance, to this conclusion—Eubulus

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was very near to the hearts of both of them—when Manasseh was announced.

“You must not think that I am ungrateful,” said the old man, “because I have not come sooner to express my thanks. Be sure that I shall never forget your kindness, and that if I have the chance I will show my sense of it. And that, indeed, is the reason of my coming to-day. What I have heard makes me think that this may be an opportunity for something more than words. I have heard that Eubulus is to go to Rome, and I know that he is like a son to you. What are you thinking of doing?”

Aquila explained to the old man how they were situated.

“So,” he exclaimed, after a pause in which he seemed to be meditating the state of affairs, “so Paul of Tarsus is here. Well, you will not expect me to think about him as you do. I know that wherever I go he is spoken against. He seems to me to be one of the men who turn the world upside down. Perhaps it is good for the world to be so turned; but old men of my way of thinking cannot be easily brought to believe it. And you are going to make a home for him here in Corinth. That is a duty of which I cannot relieve you. I am afraid that he and I should hardly agree. But there is some-

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thing that I can do for you, and that is looking after the interests of this young man at Rome."

"But the risk?" said Aquila.

"You thought nothing of the risk," answered Manasseh, "and I am an old man for whom there can be left but a small span of days, and you are a young one with life before you. Never mind about the risk. And I feel pretty sure that the worst of the feeling against us is over. It was always something of a plot rather than a real movement, and they are beginning to feel that things don't go very smoothly without us. In any case there would be far less risk for me than there would be for you."

"But your health?" said Priscilla. "Are you equal to the fatigues of the journey?"

"Perfectly so," replied Manasseh, "thanks in the first place to you, dear lady. Yes; there is nothing on that score to give you any hesitation. So you can stop here and take care of your master, as you call him. He may be all you think him. I, as you may guess, have had my thoughts fixed upon other things. Perhaps it would have been better if they had not, but I am too old to change."

"Dear sir——" began Priscilla.

But Manasseh held up his hand. "You must let me go my own way."

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And so it was settled. Manasseh, accompanied by Raphael and Eleazar, who would, however, leave him before he reached his journey's end, was to go to Rome, timing his arrival some day or two before that of Eubulus, who would travel slowly as became a State prisoner. This would give him a chance of making arrangements in advance, and favourably prepossessing, in one or more of the many ways of which he was master, those who would have to judge the young man's case.

And to Rome accordingly he went. Things there did not go quite as smoothly as he had hoped, and the difficulties arose in a quarter which the influences which he wielded could not reach. Claudius himself seemed obstinately hostile to the young man whom Manasseh was doing his best to protect. The Emperor, dimly conscious that he was unequal to the position which he held, that his was an undignified personality to represent the State that ruled the world, was furiously jealous of possible rivals. He had but lately ordered to execution the last representative of the house of Pompey, a young man, whose only fault was that he had inherited in too large a degree the personal fascinations of his great ancestor. In such a case he was not amenable to the influences which were commonly

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all powerful with him. He estimated his freedmen at what was their true value, men of a certain aptitude for affairs, but wholly incapable of appreciating the great interests of the Empire. The persuasions of his wife availed nothing. He knew that she was not unused to conspiracy, and she might be conspiring against him.

Manasseh was almost paralysed with dismay when he found that the influences on which he had hitherto relied for the accomplishment of his object, and never relied in vain, were failing. "All things at Rome are for sale" was a maxim which had ever been in his mouth, and which he had made the guiding principle of his dealings with the outer world. Deep in his heart were things which he prized above all his wealth. His pride of race, his obedience to the law which separated his nation from the world, his personal integrity were things which no conceivable bribe could have induced him to palter with for a moment. Still, as far as regarded the practical conduct of life, he believed in the omnipotence of wealth. And now his idol—he felt in his heart that the thing was an idol—failed him. And what had overthrown it? the will of a dotard! He began to reconsider his scheme of life, to feel himself less self-sufficient, to recognize the potency of what he had been always ready to despise. Ever

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practical, he turned his thoughts to the question—who will prevail where I have failed? The name of Priscilla occurred to him. “She must come,” he said to himself, “if the boy is to be saved. They will listen to her when they shut their ears to me.” And not a moment was to be lost. In an hour or so the speediest messenger that could be found in Rome was ready to start with an urgent message that should bring a more powerful advocate on the scene. Yet, after all the man had no occasion to start.

Eubulus had been as much impressed with the seriousness of the situation as was his veteran companion, but in a very different way. The revelation of the casket had greatly impressed him. He had been simply an athlete, with something indeed of the old simplicity and honesty which had almost disappeared from a degenerate age, but with a necessarily narrow view of life. Then he had learnt the secret of his descent. It roused in him no secular ambitions. He was far too sensible and too conscientious to become a pretender. Yet he felt that it was not for nothing that he could claim a share in the glories of Achilles and Alexander. There was no vanity or self-seeking in these new emotions. It was the working of the old motive of *noblesse oblige* in a nature singularly pure and unselfish. And then

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in the tedious solitude to which he was consigned—he was in the custody of an opportunist senator, who left him severely alone when he knew that the Emperor was hostile—other thoughts, linked somehow with those which I have described, began to visit him. Face to face with death, he began to recall some of the teaching which he had received from Aquila and Priscilla. They had spoken of a kingdom which was not of the earth, to which all earthly powers were subject. They had said that he could claim citizenship in that, that this was superior to all the changes and chances of mortal life. Everything was very dim and vague, yet hour by hour and day by day this faith gathered strength. He had begun with the thought of appealing from the tyranny of the present to the glories of the past; a Claudius, he had thought to himself, cannot harm the descendant of Achilles. Then there grew up into strength the thought of allegiance to a higher potentate. Loyal to Him he need not fear even the Master of the World.

But the prospect was at its gloomiest when an unexpected interference changed the situation. The young Nero, a boy scarcely thirteen, but beyond his age in an intelligent knowledge of affairs, heard, almost by accident, the story of Eubulus. The young man's adventures, the

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dangers he had encountered and escaped, and the victory achieved in spite of so many enemies, interested him as they would have interested any boy of intelligence. But when he heard of the secret of his birth, when he was told that the young man was the descendant of Achilles and a kinsman of Alexander, all the romance in him was moved. The generous instincts, which in after years the corrupting influences of power so sadly overlaid, were roused to activity. This young man was the very ideal of which he had dreamed—the descendant of heroes, himself a hero! He flew to his stepfather, the Emperor, and overwhelmed him with entreaties and reproaches. How could he think of harming so noble a being? It would be sheer profanity, he cried, to shed blood so sacred! And how splendid the revenge if a descendant of Aeneas were to extend mercy and protection to the descendant of Achilles! That would be indeed to add a crowning glory to the triumphs of the Second Troy.

Claudius could not resist these appeals. It would have been hard to refuse anything to the brilliant lad whom he had already put over the head of his own somewhat stolid son, Britannicus. And the sentiment of the ancestral glories of his house touched him at a tender point. And after

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all, when he came to reflect on it, the sympathy which the world might feel for the descendant of Achilles could not be other than remote, whereas a Pompey might have a real party behind him. Eubulus, he promised his young champion, should go unharmed.

The next day he sent for the young man, was pleased to find that he had a sufficient knowledge of the distinctions of his house, both legendary and heroic, and not ill content to discover that there was also much in which he could himself instruct him. The young Corinthian had to listen to a long and erudite lecture on the history of the House of Aeacus,¹ a small price, however, he felt, at which to purchase the favour of the Master of the World.

When he had done sufficient homage to the past, Claudius condescended to deal with the affairs of the present. Had Eubulus any plans for the future? where did he think of making his home? "I should not advise Rome," the Emperor went on, not waiting for an answer to his question. "There is too much faction, there are too many private interests. What do you say to Massilia?² I would give the Empire to be of your age, and about to settle at the town that rivals, nay surpasses, Athens itself in cul-

¹ The grandfather of Achilles.

² Marseilles.

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ture and refinement. You are fond of books ? Yes, of course you are," he went on, again not waiting for an answer. "There you will find them in plenty, and men too, who love them for their own sake. Are you married ?"

Eubulus answered, not without a blush, that he was not, but hoped to be. Claudius thought, not without bitterness and self-reproach, of his own experiences of marriage. But he was not lost to better feelings, and it touched him to see this youth still full of the innocent hopes of a first love.

"The gods prosper you," he cried.

And to Massilia Eubulus went, and found there, in company, it need hardly be said, with Cleonicé, a happy home. He became a true lover of books, but never a bookworm ; and it was his delight to exchange now and then the pleasures of his library for the sports which the rivers and forests of Gaul still supplied in abundance to the angler and the hunter. One charm of Massilia he never failed to appreciate, the succession of promising lads from Italy and the Roman provinces, who came to this University of the North. Of one such he made the acquaintance in the early days of his residence. This was Cnaeus Julius Agricola, the future conqueror of Britain, and Agricola was the first of a long line of studious youths, who

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found in the friendship of Eubulus and Cleonice all the pleasures and safeguards of home.

On one memorable occasion, however, Eubulus left his beloved retirement to fulfil what he could not but regard as a sacred duty. His old friends Aquila and Priscilla had given up their residence at Corinth, after giving the great teacher, Paul of Tarsus, shelter and companionship during his stay in that city. They had accompanied their guest to Ephesus, and there, it would seem, they had fixed their abode, though we know that they had paid one visit to Rome. Meanwhile they had kept up a correspondence with their adopted son, never failing to keep him acquainted with all that was going on in the sphere of their activity, and also with what was of still deeper interest both to him and to them, with the career of Paul. It was about fourteen years after the time at which this story opens when a letter from Aquila was put into the hands of Eubulus. A special messenger had brought it from Ephesus. It ran thus :

“Aquila and Priscilla to Eubulus, their brother in the Lord, greeting.

“Know that our beloved master is again in prison at Rome. From one cause or another he is alone. Some have left him by compulsion, some he has sent away on work that he deemed

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too urgent to be neglected, one at least, whom he would have kept with him, has basely deserted him. It is, so far as we can see, between us and you who shall go to him. We fear that he would be ill-pleased if either of us were to leave this place where we have a special commission from him for the work of the Lord. Yet even this we will risk if you cannot fill our place. Consult, as you know how, Him who is the true Guide in all doubts and perplexities, and having received such answer as you may, send word by the bearer of this epistle. Farewell."

Eubulus did as his teacher bade him, and had no doubt about the answer which was vouchsafed to him. In the course of a few hours the messenger was on his way back to Ephesus with a few words of assent. The next day he started for Rome.

What he saw and heard there it is not for me to tell. It is enough to say that his name stands first among the faithful few who had gathered round the great apostle when his pilgrimage was drawing to its close. He did not share the prisoner's fate. He was kept to do more work for the Heavenly Master on earth. It may be that Nero remembered the romantic story of an earlier time, and when he sent the Apostle to suffer death on the Ostian road by the headsman's

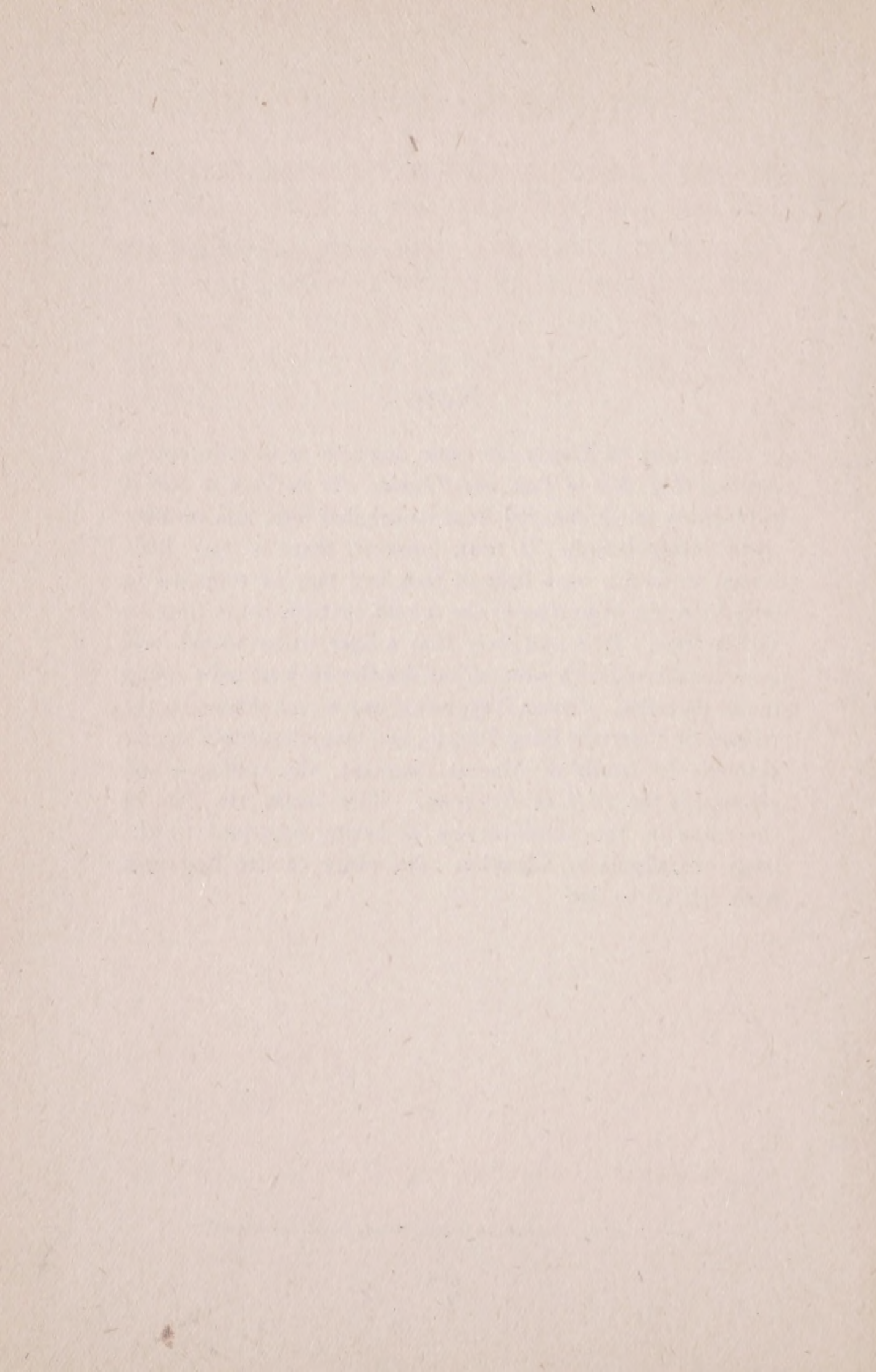
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axe, sent back his companion to his home at Massilia. Here he disappears from our ken, but all his distinctions may well seem insignificant in comparison with this, that he was permitted to associate himself with the last messages of greeting sent by the Apostle of the Gentiles to his brethren in the faith.

THE END

Note

The story of Thekla has come down to us in a document entitled *The Acts of Paul and Thekla*. As we have it now it is probably much changed from its original form and contains many interpolations. It rests, however, there is very little reason to doubt, on a basis of fact, and may be supposed to date from the beginning of the second century, if not from an earlier time. It is not likely that a later writer would have been acquainted with some curious details which are to be found in the narrative. Queen Tryphæna was a real personage, the widow of a certain King Polemo, and was related to Claudius through the family of Marcus Antonius, the colleague and afterwards the rival of Augustus. This marks the date of the scene in the amphitheatre as having happened in the reign of Caligula or Claudius. No other of the Emperors were related to her.



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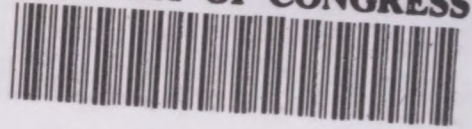
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